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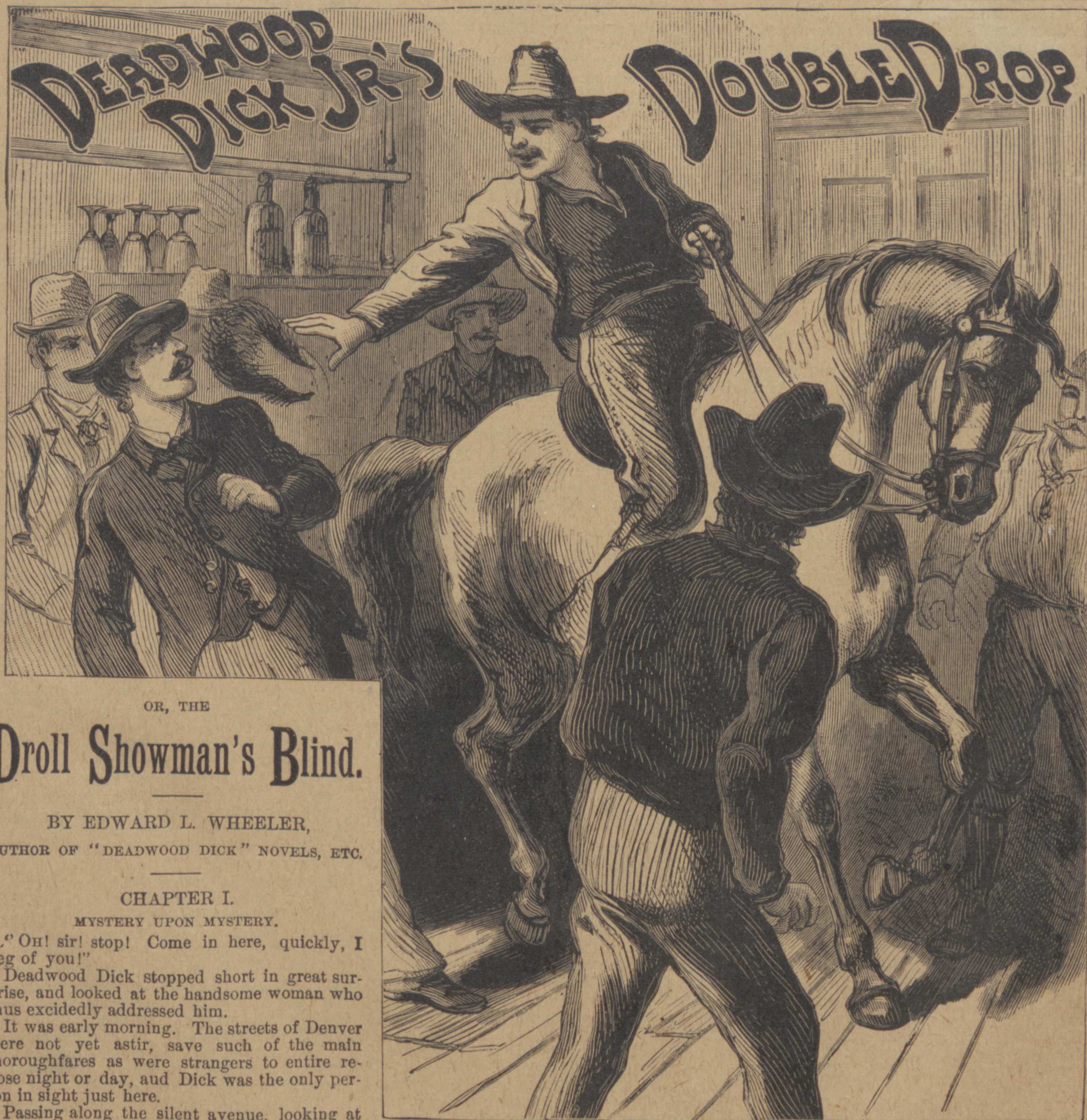
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OR, THE Droll Showman's Blind.

BY EDWARD L. WHEELER,
AUTHOR OF "DEADWOOD DICK" NOVELS, ETC.

CHAPTER I.

MYSTERY UPON MYSTERY.

"Oh! sir! stop! Come in here, quickly, I beg of you!"

Deadwood Dick stopped short in great surprise, and looked at the handsome woman who thus excitedly addressed him.

It was early morning. The streets of Denver were not yet astir, save such of the main thoroughfares as were strangers to entire repose night or day, and Dick was the only person in sight just here.

Passing along the silent avenue, looking at the numbers as he went, he had just sighted the one of which he was in search when the door

WITH A SUDDEN MOTION DEADWOOD DICK LEANED OVER AND CAUGHT HOLD
OF THE BEARD WORN BY THE LATE ARRIVAL.

of that very house was thrown suddenly open, a pretty woman in a flowing night-dress and with bare feet ran out, and, seeing him, voiced the words with which our story opens.

Dick was doubly surprised, for, as said, this was the very house of which he had come in search.

Doffing his hat promptly, he inquired:

"What is the matter, madam? What has happened to so excite you?"

"My husband! He has been murdered by my very side some time during the night! Come in, I implore you!"

"A murder? You need the police, then, I should say. I will send out the alarm for you immediately. But what was your husband's name, madam?"

"His name was Marian Roh. But, sir, come in; come in, I entreat you, until I can get the servants aroused, at least. I cannot remain alone one minute. Oh! this horror will drive me mad—mad!"

She had run down the steps and caught Dick by the arm.

More than ever surprised, for the murdered man was the very person who had summoned him to Denver, Dick allowed himself to be led hurriedly up the steps and into the house.

Just as they entered the servants of the household were making their appearance, with every evidence of haste in their dressing, surprise stamped upon every face. They were four in number, three women and one man, the latter a tall personage of dignified bearing.

The woman addressed him, still retaining her hold upon Dick's sleeve.

"Summon the police, Barlow, as soon as you can!" she directed, with hasty utterance. "Mr. Roh has been murdered."

"Murdered!" cried they all.

"Yes, yes. Make haste, and give the alarm."

The man ran out without a second's delay, and the woman pulled Dick in the direction of the staircase.

Another man might have refused to be the first one to visit the scene of the crime, but this was Deadwood Dick, Junior, prince of Western detectives. For more reasons than one he was willing to go.

However, he made a show of objecting.

"But, madam," he demurred, holding back a little, "you have no need of me; you have sent for the police, and you have these women with you—"

"No, no, you must come with me, indeed you must, sir! I must go back to the room, I cannot go alone, and they would not go there for anything—I am sure they would not. You must come!"

And, pulling him, she placed her bare feet on the steps and started up.

Dick offered no further objection, but followed her, she still retaining a firm grip upon his sleeve, evidently unmindful in her great excitement of her state of deshabille.

The three women-servants were left in the hall below, huddled together with scared faces.

Reaching the landing above, the woman pulled Dick into a front room.

On the bed lay the victim of the crime.

"See!" she cried, pointing. "My love, my husband! The hand that has robbed me of him shall die by my hand. I vow—I swear it!"

Dick saw that she was almost beside herself, owing to the shock and her great grief. Her eyes were wildly dilated, her lips remained parted, and her breast heaved with great emotion.

"Then you know who did it?" Dick asked, quietly.

"No; would to God that I did!"

"And you just discovered that he was dead?"

"Only a minute ago, sir. I awoke, touched him, found that he was as cold as ice, and starting up quickly to look at his face I saw that he was dead—saw the blood! Leaping out of bed, screaming, I flew out of the room, down the stairs, out of the door—You know the rest."

"Let go my arm, please," commanded Dick. "I will throw open the blinds."

"I forgot I had hold of you," said the woman, letting go of his sleeve. "I scarcely know what I say or do."

She clasped and unclasped her hands with extreme nervousness, and her gaze was fastened upon the form that lay upon the bed, as if she found it impossible to remove her eyes from it.

Dick threw open a window and let in a flood of light. It was a summer morning, and the house was so situated that the sun, just risen above the mountains, looked squarely into the room and cast its rays upon the bed, revealing the crime in all its horror.

At the instant the woman gave one shriek, threw up her arms, and fell to the floor in a dead faint.

For the first time Dick noticed blood on her right sleeve.

Stepping to the door, he called down to the servants in the hall and bade them come up.

They obeyed, entering the room with trembling fear, and their faces grew even more pale than before, if possible, when they beheld the dead form lying on the bed.

Dick did not give them time for idle staring.

"See to your mistress!" he ordered, authoritatively. "She has fainted. I will help you to carry her to another room."

He and two of the women lifted her, and the third, leading the way, they bore her to another room just across the hall, where she was laid on a sofa. Dick immediately returned.

Closing the door, he took a critical survey of the apartment.

It was a large chamber, handsomely furnished. The murdered man's clothes lay on a chair in an orderly manner, near the head of the bed. Those of the woman were not in sight—were probably in the wardrobe.

The murdered man looked to be sixty years of age. The top of his head was bald, what hair he had was white, and his short side whiskers were only a little less white than his hair. The rest of his face was clean shaven, and it was a face of kindly expression.

In one side of the neck was a gaping gash where a blow with a knife had severed the jugular. The blood was everywhere on the front side of the bed, and on the floor, and it seemed clear that the man had partly raised himself in bed after the blow had been struck. But there was no drop of blood to be found beyond a certain limit in any direction.

There were no evidences of a robbery. An immense diamond stud in the dead man's shirt sparkled in the sunlight where it lay on the chair, and a massive chain hung from his vest.

No clew appeared.

There were two windows to the room, both of which evidently had been open all night, but the blinds were shut and secured on the inside—save the pair Dick had opened. There could be no way, apparently, of reaching the room by means of the windows, anyhow, save by the use of a ladder.

A key was in the lock of the door leading into the hall, inside. Whether the door had been locked or not, and so found, would be for the woman to say. Another door, open, revealed a bathroom, with a door opposite, which evidently

opened into another room beyond, but that door was secured by two hooks on the inside. It seemed self-evident that the hall door had been used.

Dick searched well for something that would throw some light upon the mystery, but he searched in vain. It seemed to be a case without a clew.

There was no mark of blood on the door.

Going back again to the bed, he made a closer examination there, allowing nothing to escape his practiced eyes.

There was a hole in the sheet and into the hair mattress, made by the blade of the knife when the fatal blow had been struck. It was a little more than an inch in width.

This was some distance from where the man's neck now lay, which furnished the proof that he had moved after the fatal wound had been given. Dick pondered how it was that the woman had not awakened at that time, and could not answer the question.

He remembered the blood on the sleeve of her nightgown.

"Can it be that she did the deed herself?" he asked himself. But no, it did not seem possible, for could any one have acted a part as she had appeared in the reality—he considered it the reality?

"It is a mystery, a more than mystery, and one that I must unravel," he decided. "This is the man who sent for me, bidding me come to Denver in all haste and to his house the very hour of my arrival, no matter what the time, day or night, and I have come only to find him dead—murdered. Richard, my boy, you have a job on hand."

CHAPTER II.

SUSPECTING A SCAPEGOAT.

About that time the front door was heard to close.

Steps sounded on the stairs the next moment, and Dick opened the door of the room.

It was the man Barlow returning, and with him were a couple of policemen, who looked somewhat frightened, as if unused to dealing with crime on so large a scale as the present.

"Where is Mrs. Roh?" the man asked.

"In that room," answered Dick, pointing. "She fainted, and we took her in there."

"And what were you doing here alone?"

"Waiting for you," answered Dick. "Since the lady dragged me into this affair, my curiosity is aroused to learn more about it. It is a terrible crime, and I hope the police can unravel it."

"And so do I, sir. Officers, I suggest that this man be held, for he must be an important witness."

Dick looked at the man keenly. What meant such words from him?

"Yes, you must stay," said one of the officers. "There will be an inquest, and the coroner will want all the information he can get."

"Yes, I will stay," said Dick.

They came on and into the room, and the policemen were visibly shocked.

Dick noticed that the man Barlow seemed to avoid looking at the murdered man, at first, but soon he did so.

His face was pale, and he was much affected. There was a restlessness about his manner that Dick took note of, although it was no more than might naturally appear in any person.

"A bad business," the man observed.

"A mighty bad business," one of the officers agreed. "Have you looked around here any, sir?" to Dick.

"Yes, I have looked around," answered Dick, in a careless way. "A man has to look around, coming into such a place as

I came into it. Of course I looked around, sir."

"Oh!" with an expression of contempt. "I mean did you find anything?"

"I wasn't looking for anything," said Dick.

The policeman gave a sniff of disdain and glanced at his companion, and the suggestion of a smile curled their lips.

Dick had his eyes on the man Barlow, without appearing to be watching him, but the man showed no signs that could be read as either for or against him. He was now apparently interested.

The officers looked around, speaking in low tones to each other, and Dick moved over near Barlow.

"I take it you belong here," he observed.

"Yes," the man answered, "I am the butler."

"Have you any idea who killed the man?"

"Not the slightest, sir."

"Couldn't have been a robber, I should say," Dick remarked.

"How do you know that? What business have you got to be supposing anything about it?"

"Well, I am human, and have my share of human curiosity," rejoined Dick. "I was dragged into it, as you yourself know, and it would be strange if I had no interest to learn more about it."

"I suppose so," the man grunted.

"They will put a smart detective on the affair, of course," Dick ventured.

"Who will?"

"The police, of course."

"Oh, yes; I suppose they'll do that."

Seeing that the man was not inclined to talk, Dick left him and walked to the window and looked out.

By the time the two policemen had satisfied themselves that they had not enough brains between them to cope with such a case, a captain and a couple of detectives arrived.

The latter went about the matter in a better way.

They examined the room with care, much as Dick himself had done, asking questions of the butler and also of Dick.

But, when finally they were done, they had to admit to themselves if to no one else, that they were "stumped," to use the homely term. It was a mystery that had no ray of light anywhere.

Then came the coroner and others, and the case was taken hold of in the usual manner.

The coroner got together a jury and opened his inquest.

Mrs. Roh was the first witness called. She was like death in appearance, almost. She gave her name and age, and stated the leading facts about as she had told them to Deadwood Dick.

Questioned further, she said that she and her husband had retired at about eleven o'clock on the previous night. Mr. Roh had locked the door, and she herself had tried it before getting into bed. She had been up rather late for several nights and slept soundly. Did not awaken once until morning, when she made the awful discovery in the manner stated.

"Did you then find the door still locked?" asked the coroner.

"I do not know," was the answer.

"Do you not remember whether it was unlocked or not?"

"No, sir. I was terrified, and had only the one thought of reaching the street and giving the alarm. I suppose it must have been locked, but I cannot say. It was certainly locked when we retired."

"You were greatly excited, I suppose."

"I did not know what I was doing, sir. The servants tell me that I actually ran out of doors in my nightdress."

"Have you any suspicion against any one?"

"N—no, sir."

"Had your husband any enemy that you are aware of?"

"No, sir."

"You have stated that you were his second wife. Had he any children grown, can you say?"

"A son."

"What is his name?"

"Harmon Roh."

"Where is he?"

"I—I do not know, sir."

"Then he does not live at home?"

"No; his father turned him away from home."

"For what reason?"

"It was something about property. I never asked the particulars. He was opposed to his father's second marriage."

"Has he been seen here lately?"

"I had rather not answer that question, sir."

"You must answer it."

"He was here the day before yesterday, then."

"Ha! is that so? What brought him here?"

"I do not know. He had a stormy interview with his father."

"Mr. Roh is understood to have been a rich man. Can you say how much he was worth?"

"About half a million I believe."

"Is there a will?"

"He told me some time ago that he had willed everything to me."

"And that would cut the son off entirely, of course. What do you know about the character of Harmon Roh?"

"I will say nothing against him, sir. Really, I do not know much about him. He did not like me, and I had no chance to get well acquainted with him before he was sent away."

"That will do for the present, Mrs. Roh."

The next witness called was Howard Smith, and Deadwood Dick answered to that name and took the stand. He corroborated the woman's statements as far as they had concerned himself. Beyond that he did not appear to know much, and did not make a particularly brilliant witness, and was soon dismissed.

The next witness was Wilson Barlow, the butler.

He answered the preliminary questions, and told what he knew of the matter, which was, in substance, nothing. Asked concerning Harmon Roh, he said that he had heard him spoken of as a bad character, and he certainly thought he was, the little he had seen of him since he had been in the service of the father. Speaking of the visit Mrs. Roh had mentioned, he said that the son had demanded money, which the father had refused. The son, on leaving the house, had muttered something about fixing the old man out.

The other servants knew nothing, and the inquest closed. The murdered man had met his death at the hand of some one to the jury unknown, but with suspicion pointing toward Harmon Roh, the son.

CHAPTER III.

TAKING A PARTNER.

Deadwood Dick left the house in company with Jim Bronson, one of the detectives.

He had no further excuse for remaining there, but he did not intend by any means to drop out of the case.

There was a double reason why he should remain in it. In the first place, he did not know for what he had been summoned by the murdered man, and in

the next instance he had that mystery to solve—if he could.

"What do you think of this affair, anyhow?" he asked of his fellow detective, who was one of the keenest ferrets of his time on the Denver force. Dick had heard of him, although he had never formed his acquaintance.

"I hardly know what to think of it, yet," Bronson answered. "It is a rather peculiar matter. I am inclined to look with some suspicion upon— But I guess I had better keep my mouth shut regarding what I think. You are a stranger to me, and it won't interest you, anyhow."

"Nothing would interest me more," averred Dick.

"Well, I prefer not to talk about it."

"But I want you to talk."

"The deuce you do!" and Jim looked at him in surprise. "What difference do you suppose that makes to me?"

"Not much, but it makes some difference to me. Tell you what I'll do with you, just for a little bet."

"What is that?"

"Where are you going now?"

"To headquarters."

"All right; I will walk there with you. I'll bet you a good cigar that you will tell me all you can about the matter within an hour."

"Well, you are a monument of gall, I must say! What the mischief do you take me for?"

"Just what you are—one of the best detectives in this city."

"And you must take me for a jackass, besides."

"Not at all. Do you take my bet?"

"What's the use?"

"It will give me a good cigar at your expense, that is all, and I flatter myself that I know a good weed when I strike one."

"You are a fellow of cheek," asserted Bronson, a little nettled. "Why should I tell you what I think? What are you talking about, anyhow?"

Dick smiled.

"I am talking about a bet, just now," he rejoined. "I have asked you what you think about this murder, and you have declined to answer. I have offered to bet that you will tell me all you think about it inside of one hour. Now, then, I am done."

The Denver detective was still more nettled; he could not comprehend what the stranger was driving at; and yet, this stranger's confident way impressed him. There must be something back of it.

"Who the mischief are you?" he demanded.

"Howard Smith."

"I know that is the name you gave, but is that your real name?"

"What reason have you to suppose that it isn't? Come, do you take my bet or not?"

"Yes, confound you, I do take it!"

"All right! Let me see if I can fish up a card for you."

Dick felt in his pockets, and from an inside one in his vest brought out a card, which he handed to his companion.

The moment Bronson glanced at it the expression on his face changed, and without a word he pulled out a cigar and offered it.

"I won't swear how good it is," he said, "but it is a cigar. The bet is yours. And here is my hand."

Dick laughed as he took the cigar and gave his hand.

They shook hands heartily.

"I thought my name would be worth a cigar," Dick remarked. "But this is between ourselves, you understand. No need to let any one else know who I am, for it might stand in my way."

"You are going into this case, then?"
 "I am in it already, but I need your help."

"You shall have it, for there is no use in my trying to do anything with you to buck against."

"I am not so sure about that. I think we will make a good team, and if you are willing to have it that way we will work the thing together. What do you say?"

"It will be an honor to me, if you mean that."

"And certainly I mean it."

"So be it."

"Well, then, what do you think of the case?"

"I have a suspicion against that woman, to begin with. I do not think she is innocent."

"Why?"

"That man moved about, after he was cut, and I have no doubt uttered a cry of pain and alarm. Maybe more than one. Do you suppose she slept on without knowing anything about it?"

"It looks so."

"I know it looks so, but did she? That is the question."

"She certainly did, if we are to take her story as true."

"Yes, but if she had any share in the murder she has lied like sin, and her story goes for nothing."

"Then you suspect her?"

"At any rate, I am not going to hold her innocent until I prove her so."

"That is just where we differ, Bronson. I begin by considering her innocent of the crime—as innocent as I am."

"On what grounds?"

"Her conduct when she discovered the murder."

"Well, your judgment is worth something, and I defer to it. You are Deadwood Dick."

"If she is innocent, then who is the guilty one?"

"The coroner and his jury look with suspicion upon Harmon Roh."

"What do you know about him?"

"I know him, and I know that he is something of a sport and man around town, but I never considered him bad at heart."

"He lives here in Denver, then?"

"No, but he has been here lately. He hangs out at a camp west of here, a place called Creede."

"I know the place, have been there. Was there when Bob Ford got his quietus. Was doing a little job of detective work in the neighborhood at the time, in disguise."

"No need to tell you anything about Creede, then. That is where he has been hanging out ever since he and his father had the flare up, and I imagine that he has not been lying on flowery beds of ease, by any means. In fact, he looked rather down-at-the-heel the other day."

"Do you know where to find him?"

"He is probably down at McTurk's, on — Street. He and McTurk used to pull together."

"And who is McTurk?"

"An Irishman who keeps a saloon and billiard place. I think he is still at the old stand. I have not been over that way in some time."

"Suppose we call there after you go to headquarters."

"That suits me."

"But, mind you, not a hint as to who I am; you can give your chief to understand that you are holding fast to me, if you want to. Then I will unfold my scheme to you later on. I think we can work the case to the end by pulling together."

"You think so? I know we can, with you in it."

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT MCTURK KNEW.

When they reached headquarters, Dick Bristol stopped his companion outside.

"It won't do for me to go in here if I want to remain incog.," he said. "Some of the men would be sure to know me, if there are many in the office, and it is too late to think of putting on a make-up."

"Well, do as you please. I think you are right. I will join you in about a quarter of an hour, if you will say where. Then we will get down to business."

Dick named a place, and they separated, the Denver detective entering the office.

He made his report, withholding some points, and the case was given into his hands with instructions to sift it to the bottom, arrest the murderer, if possible, and report.

Which Bronson pledged himself to do, as well he might with such a pard in the field as Richard Bristol.

Going out, he rejoined Deadwood Dick.

"Now for McTurk's," he announced.

"What is your plan?"

"To find young Roh, the first thing."

"Easy enough, I imagine, particularly if he happens to be guilty."

"How so?" in some surprise.

"He will want to appear innocent; so he will remain in sight."

"Sure enough. Now, what is your own plan?"

"I want your help. I have commenced operations at the house, but now, of course, the doors are closed against me, and you must open them for me so that I can work."

"How can I do that?"

"Easily enough. I will assume a disguise, and you will lend me your badge or get me one, somehow. I will return there as a Denver police detective, and will have a clean sweep of the whole field."

"Good enough; that ought to work."

"And in return, I will give you the benefit of all I learn."

"I could not ask that—"

"No matter, I offer it. I have two irons in the fire here, and I will let you attend to the murder case and have all the credit of that—in fact, you may get it, anyhow, without my help."

"Not likely; I could not get a smell if you were against me."

"Nonsense. My name is not everything."

"Maybe not, but it took a good deal of merit to make your name what it is today. I'll do whatever you ask."

"So much for my plan, then."

The sign that swung to the breeze in front of the saloon still bore the name of Terrence McTurk, and going in, Jim Bronson greeted the jolly-faced Irishman behind the bar as Terrence.

"How are ye, me b'y?" he was greeted in turn.

"Able to sit up and take my meals," answered Jim, pleasantly. "This is my friend Mr. Smith, Mr. McTurk."

"Glad to know ye Oi am!" assured the Irishman, offering his big fist. "A friend av Jim Bronson's is a friend av Terrence McTurk every toime, and don't ye forget it!"

"And a friend of Bronson's is my friend, too," assured Dick.

Partaking of a friendly "smile," the Denver detective touched upon his business there.

"I want to get a tip, McTurk," he said. "Oi thought so," was the response.

"Phwat is it?"

"I want to find Harm Roh."

"Bedad, it is not half an hour ago he was here, just as Oi opened my place, and it was bad he looked, Oi'm tellin' yez."

"What was the matter with him?"

"Oi asked him thot same, and he passed it off, but it was somethin' all dhe same. And dhe drink he took was enough to lay him out, on me wurrud."

"Where is he now?"

"Said he was goin' straight to Creede."

"Had a horse?"

"Yes, he had a pony wi'd him. Oi found him and dhe pony here phwen Oi opened up."

"Then he wanted to see you before he set out, I take it," put in Dick.

"He did thot same, sor."

"What did he want?" asked Jim.

"See here, Jim Bronson, Harm Roh is a friend av mine, an' Oi'm a friend av his," the Irishman parleyed. "You are av dhe police, and av it is gettin' av him into throuble Oi'd be—"

"You can't get him into trouble nor get him out if he is in, Terrence, so you may just as well talk right to the point."

"But it is yersel' dhat could do aythur, begob."

"And I would be glad enough to help him out of trouble, if I found him in it, and I could do him a good turn—if he deserved it. You ought to know that, Terrence."

"Bedad, it is always square enough Oi have found ye, Jimsey."

"Then answer my question. What did Harm want to see you for?"

"Well, he wanted a bit av a loan, dhat was all."

"And he got it?"

"He did thot."

"How much?"

"Be hanged to ye, Jim, av it was anybody but yersel'—"

"But it's me, Terrence, so out with it. Maybe I can do you a good turn some day."

"Well, he wanted a t'ousand, but Oi couldn't let him have dhat, fur ye knows he is a bit wild and Oi took it dhat he wanted to go buckin' some tiger over dhere at Creede—"

"What did you give him, then?"

"A hundred."

"Then a hundred would do if he couldn't get the thousand, eh?"

"He called it a grub stake. Wi'h dhe t'ousand he wanted to buy out a find dhat had just been struck."

"I see."

"And dhat is all Oi can do fur ye, Jimsey?"

"Well, I suppose so. But you said he looked bad; what seemed to be the matter?"

"Oi take it he had been on a rip-roarin' tear around town all night, fur he looked weak and white like, and maybe he had been in a bit av a foight as well, fur Oi saw blood on his hand."

"Blood on his hand?"

"Dhat same. But, divil take ye, it is drawin' talk out av a bar av pig-iron ye'd be!"

"I believe there was a fight over the other side of town last night," the Denver detective passingly observed. "Maybe he had a hand in that. No matter; you say he took the trail for Creede?"

"Dhat same he did."

"All right, McTurk, and much obliged to you. Hoped to see him before he left town, but now that he is gone that settles it. Don't forget my friend Smith, if he drops in to see you."

"I'll ask him to take something, so that it will aid his memory," said Dick, and he treated, after which he and Jim took leave.

"Well, what do you think now?" asked the Denver detective, the moment they were outside.

"I think the young fellow is innocent, if he isn't a fool," said Dick.

"You seem inclined to hold everybody innocent in this case, it seems. Do you forget the blood on his hand?"

"And everybody is innocent till proven guilty. No, I do not forget the blood; that is just the point. A guilty man would have taken pains to make sure no blood was on his hands as a matter of fact."

CHAPTER V.

DICK'S NEW DEAL.

Deadwood Dick's argument was doubly good.

A guilty man would have made sure to remove all evidences of his guilt, as far as possible.

Then, too, would he not have made sure of getting out of the city as soon as possible? Or, remaining, have taken steps to appear innocent when brought to face the crime?

These arguments Dick presented, and held to his theory that Harmon Roh was an innocent man.

"You can depend upon it," he said, "that he has not heard of his father's death, and it will be a surprise to him when he does hear of it. At any rate, such is my humble opinion."

"And the opinion of Deadwood Dick counts for something," said his companion. "Nevertheless, you will not deny that he should be arrested and brought back here to face the music? Public opinion would be dead against me if I allowed him to get away."

"Why, we set out to arrest him, did we not?"

"Certainly."

"It must be done, and he must explain all about the blood and where he was last night."

"And I must take the trail and bring him back before he gets too much of a start. If I find he has taken the straight trail in the direction of Creede, I will have to believe him innocent."

"Yes, for otherwise, laying all the other objections aside, he would take any other direction, if he desired to escape. But he is innocent, if not a fool, and you have assured me that he is not that. Now, fix me out with your badge, if you can spare it, and I will go back to the house and see what can be picked up there."

This was done, and after some little further conversation, they parted company for the time being.

Deadwood Dick assumed a disguise, and in due time was back again at the house where the murder had been done, and the butler opened the door to him.

"My name is Hill," Dick announced. "I am from the police."

"Ah! step right in," said the butler.

"I am glad you have come, too."

"What leads you to say that?"

"It saves me from going to the police, that is all."

"Indeed!"

"I have made a discovery."

"Ha! A discovery, eh? What is it?"

"Not so loud, but come with me and I will show you."

The butler led the way to a little room in the rear of the parlors, where he closed the door when they had entered.

He motioned Dick to a chair, and, going to a desk in one corner of the room, he unlocked and opened a drawer and brought forth a knife wrapped in a handkerchief, the latter having blood upon it.

"Where did you get these things?" Dick inquired.

"In the place where the murderer concealed them," was the answer. "They were found by merest chance, too."

"You surprise me. I believe you have solved the whole mystery, my man, and made it an easy matter for the police to handle the case. If so, I'll see that due credit is given you—"

"No, no, I don't want a cent's worth of credit, for, as I tell you, it was a matter of accident, almost, that the things were found at all. This knife is one that has the letters H. R. cut in the handle, and those letters stand for the name of the murdered man's son."

"And what about the handkerchief?"

"There is no mark on that. It is only a common affair, and none too clean, as you can see."

"Well, where did you find them, and how?"

"Soon told. When the undertaker came, a little while ago, I went up to lend what help I could in the matter of removing the body and cleaning up the room so the women-servants would enter it."

"They would not go in?"

"Not while the blood was there, at any rate."

"Go on."

"Well, we moved the bed in order to handle the body more easily, and in doing that my foot struck the fire-grate under the mantel and broke the fancy covering that covers the grates in summer. It was only paper, anyhow."

"I see."

"The undertaker can tell you all about it, and his assistant the same. When we had finished, I went to patch up the damage I had done, when something caught my eye under the grate at the back part, and I called attention to it, and we got it out."

"And this was what you found?"

"Exactly."

"Remarkable, my man, remarkable. Put there by the murderer, beyond the shadow of a doubt."

"Why, of course, or so it seems to me, for you see the blood on the handkerchief is no more than dry, even now."

"You are right. It looks bad for that son."

"So I think, much as I hate to think it of him. But, when a deed like this has been done there must be no sentiment in the way of justice, and I would hand you the knife just the same if it bore the name of my own brother."

"I can well believe it, sir."

Dick had taken the knife and handkerchief and was examining them.

The initials cut in the handle were certainly those of Harmon Roh, whether the knife belonged to him or not.

"Does anybody know you have found this?" asked Dick. "That is to say, anybody besides the undertaker and his assistant?"

"Yes, all in the house know about it. I told Mrs. Roh right away, and the servants were present."

"No use asking that it be kept secret, then. There seems no doubt but that he is the guilty man—I mean young Roh."

"It looks so, much as I hate to believe it, sir."

"Well, I am much obliged to you. The police will make use of the clew immediately. But this is not my errand here. I have come to search the house from top to bottom, and I must see Mrs. Roh and the servants."

"Shall I announce you to Mrs. Roh?"

"Yes."

The man rose and left the room, and Dick nodded his head after him when he had closed the door.

"Pretty good, my fine fellow," he said to himself, "but not quite good enough. If I don't largely mistake, you are going to figure in this thing before it is done with."

When the man returned, Dick had wrapped the knife and handkerchief up and put them away in his pocket, and was ready to follow to the room where Mrs. Roh would see him. He found her si-

lently weeping, and there did not seem to be any doubt of the genuineness of her sorrow.

"I am sorry to trouble you, madam—"

"No trouble, sir," she interrupted him, waving him to a seat, "if it will only lead to the arrest of the murderer of my husband."

"I hope it will, now that we have a clew. I must have a little talk with you before I begin my search of the house. Can you explain about the blood that was on the sleeve of your nightdress—"

She interrupted him with a cry.

"Blood on my sleeve!" she exclaimed. "You would not think me guilty of so horrible a crime, would you? How do you know there was blood on my sleeve? You were not here, so how could you know? But, yes, I can explain about it, and easily enough."

"Do so."

"It must have got there when I reached over and touched my husband, when I made the discovery that he was dead."

"And as you sprung out of bed immediately, of course it got smeared nowhere on your side of the bed. That makes that all plain. But, now, who would know to put the knife behind the fireplace screen where it was found?"

"Any one who knew such a place was there, sir."

"And who would know it?"

"Any one of the household, or who had ever been such."

"Very well; I will see you again before I take leave. I must now go through the house."

"Barlow will show you everywhere, sir, and will assist you as you may direct. Let nothing remain undone that will go toward putting the crime where it belongs. The slayer of my husband must suffer for the crime."

Dick bowed and left the room, and found the butler waiting at the door.

CHAPTER VI.

A PECULIAR PAIR.

The town of Creede is too well known to stand in need of description here.

At this time it was in its heyday, and was to Colorado what Deadwood was to Dakota when we first took up the pen.

It was the boast of the denizens of the gold land that Creede had everything that money could buy, and there was no need to go out of town for anything. If it was not in stock, all you had to do was to leave your order.

We well remember the day when the first piano came to town. Some one had made the remark that the place did not own a single piano. In less than four days one of the leading saloons had a handsome upright instrument, at a cost of not a cent less than twenty-five hundred dollars.

This by the way.

One afternoon a peculiar specimen of humanity struck the camp.

He was a man far along on the downhill side of life, and it was plain that fortune had never smiled upon him very kindly, if appearances went for aught.

Wretchedly clad, he wore one boot and one shoe, his coat was split half way up the back, a bit of rope did service for suspenders, and the remains of what had once been a white plug hat crowned his head.

What drew attention to him more than anything else was the fact that he had a pig with him, a lean, savage-looking animal, with the bristles on its back standing almost upright. He had a string to one hind leg, and as the pig ran on ahead, it looked as if the pig was leading the man.

The man held the string with his right hand, and in his left he carried a staff with a crook at the top.

By the time he had reached the camp center he had drawn a great deal of attention to himself, and a crowd was following at his heels, laughing and jeering at him, and finally he stopped.

"Wull, what d'ye see ter laugh at?" he demanded. "Didn't ye never see a hog before? The way my Angelina trotted into ye'r town, et looked as ef she tho'rt she had struck a reg'lar hog pen and would be right at home with her own kind; and I ain't prepared ter say she has made any mistake."

The crowd laughed, and one smart fellow spoke up.

"You must pick your company, old man. Maybe you chose the porker so as to have one of your own kind with you."

"Wull, as ter that, I wanted a pard, and as et was a choice 'tween hogs of two kinds, I took the kind that wears bristles fer a fact. I had had about dealin's enough with the other kind."

"And is that pig your grub stake?" asked another wit in the throng.

"A grub stake! Youngster, this hyer pig is my whole fortune, she is. I would be walkin' on my uppers this minute if it wasn't fer this same pig. Ain't that about kerreck, Angelina?"

The pig stopped its nosing around the ground, lifted its head, and gave forth a squeal.

The crowd was now large, and had formed a circle around the old man and his strange traveling companion, and this seemed to amuse them greatly.

"And how is the pig your fortune?" asked the first speaker.

"That pig, gentlemen, is educated," explained the old fellow. "She kin sing, dance, read, write, figger, and do a hull lot of things that ye wouldn't think possible fer any but a two-legged hog ter do. Can't ye, Angelina?"

That name seemed to amuse the crowd more than anything else, so far.

The pig nodded, gave a squeal, and frisked around in a playful manner.

"Oh, she aire a dandy, aire Angelina," the old man declared. "Ef you would like ter see her perform it will cost ye only a bit a-piece, gentlemen, and ye needn't pay a cent if ther show ain't worth ther money."

The crowd was eager for that, certainly.

Taking an old harmonica from his pocket, the old man put it to his lips and began to play, at the same time patting his knee and tapping the ground with his foot, and with a wiggle of its tail the piggie struck in and began to dance.

This was amusing, decidedly, and when the music stopped the crowd was eager for more.

"That there was only a beginnin'," said the old vagabond. "We will now have a waltz, and Angelina will stand up on her hind legs to execute it. Choose ye'r partner, Angelina, and ther band will begin ter play forthwith."

Whether the old man pulled the string a certain way, or telegraphed through it to direct the pig's action, or whether the selection was a natural one, we will not try to explain, but the pig ran forward to the dandy who had first set out to have a little fun with the old man.

The fellow jumped, and tried to get out of the way, but it was of no use; the pig got hold of him by the leg of the trousers and pulled.

"He! he! he!" laughed the old man. "Angelina knows her kind when she sees 'em, young man. Hold on thar! Don't you kick my pig, or by ther great Alexander what is dead an' gone ef I don't make you think thar's a tornader let loose around hyer! Come away, Angelina, thar' is too much hog thar' fer you, my pet!"

At this the crowd fairly whooped itself

hoarse, and the young fellow made his exit with considerable promptitude.

"Wull, ef ye can't git a pardner ye will have ter dance et alone, Angelina," the old man remarked. "Git ready, now, and away she goes, with a one, two, three, and tra-la-la-lee, and a—" And then he put the harmonica to his lips and began to play again, this time a waltz.

Sure enough, the pig got up on its hind legs and began to move around in its own fashion to the music. The man called it waltzing, and the crowd accepted it for such good-naturedly.

"How was that?" cried the old man, when he stopped playing. "Wasn't that jest about suberb? Wull, I reckon! Thar' ain't no flies on my Angelina, no way ye kin fix et. She is jest about ther darlingest hog ever was, when ye git 'quainted with her. And now what will ye have, gentlemen?"

"A song!" was the call.

"Yas! Yas! Give us a song, old man!"

"D'ye hear, Angelina, my dear? The gentlemen want ye to sing 'em a song. Git ready, now, while I tune up, and then do your purtiest!"

The pig gave a preliminary squeal or two, and then sat up on its hams and crossed its forelegs in front, and in that manner looked around at the crowd, this way and that, convulsing them with laughter.

"Aire ye ready, Angelina?"

The pig gave a nod and a delicate squeal.

"All right, then, hyer she goes, with a one, two, three, and a tra-la-la-lee, and a—" And with that he struck up the music, and the pig opened its mouth and sang.

And such singing! It was a continuous squeal, almost, with a little waver and quaver about it at times, but all the same one long-drawn continuous squeal of the genuine piggie sort. But the manner of it was where the fun came in, and the music of the harmonica aided the deception.

The pig lolled its head from side to side much as a graduating schoolmiss who has the bee in her bonnet that she was cut out for a Patti might do, and the crowd, now a great one, in their eagerness to see, pressed forward till the narrow circle was closed and the performance had to stop.

Then it was that the old man tried to pass his hat.

"Chip in your bits, gentlemen," he invited. "You have brought the show to a close, and it ain't my fault. Chip in your bits, and then we'll see ef thar' ain't a hall that kin be hired fer Angelina, fer she is worthy of a hall. I leave et to you ef she ain't. Chip in your bits, now, and don't cheat poor piggie out of her supper!"

Some coins dropped into the hat, but before the owner of the pig could get fairly at work the crowd had commenced to melt away, and ere long it had nearly disappeared.

"Jes' like blamed hogs!" the old man cried. "That's wuss'n you would do, now ain't et, Angelina? But we won't be too rough on 'em, fer some of em chipped in like gentlemen, and the rest didn't know any better'n ter slink away. But, then, they couldn't all see that time."

"Say, stranger, what is your name?" some one inquired.

"My name?"

"Yes."

"Wull, now, you aire the fu'st euss that has tooken that much interest in me in a dog's age. My full name is Reginald Gustavo Spade, or it was till my brother cheated me out of the girl I loved and married her, when it became Mud—Mud Spade, if you like."

The remnant of the crowd laughed at that—it takes but little to cause such a crowd to laugh.

"But now ter business," Mr. Spade announced. "You may think I'm doin' this all fer fun, but that ain't so. I am on a still hunt, and not very still, either, fer a feller whose first name is Deadwood Dick, Junior. Does anybody hyar know anything about sech a chap? I want him, and I want him bad. Don't all speak ter oncet!"

CHAPTER VII. MAKING A MISTAKE.

Such an announcement was a surprise for the crowd.

The name was one that was not unknown there in Creede, in fact, it was a very familiar one.

Everywhere in the whole West the name of Deadwood Dick was famous, and for such a personage as this to make inquiry for him, declaring that it was important that he should find him, created amazement.

"What der you want wi' him?" one fellow demanded.

"That is jest what I want ter tell him when I find him," was the answer.

"Yas, but what kin a feller like you want wi' a feller like him, that is what I mean," was urged.

"An' I tell ye that is jest what I want him fer, to tell him what I want when I find him. Has he been hyar of late? D'ye know whar' he is?"

"No, he ain't been hyar in a good while," spoke up another.

"Jes' my luck," Reginald Gustavo Spade complained. "Hyar I have tramped ther hull blame West over, me an' Angelina tergether, tryin' ter find him, but et ain't been no go. We have got close onto him oncet or twicet, but was jes' too late ter git him. Angelina, ain't et too blamed bad?"

The pig gave a squeal.

"Of course et aire, I proclaim et aloud. Et aire too durn bad that we have come to another bloomin' town all for nothin'. That Deadwood Dick is ther hardest man ter ketch that I ever seen. He is like Paddy's flea, when you put ye'r finger onto him he ain't thar'. Well, Angeline, thar' ain't but one thing fer us ter do about et, an' that is, take a rest and trudge right erlong."

The piggie gave a nod and a grunt.

"I tell ye what et aire, boyees," the old man complained, "et is rather a rough road ter travel, but we have sot out ter do a sartain thing, and by ther great roly-poly we ar' goin' ter do et if ther buttons stay on, you bet! And this hyar pig, I tell ye she is worth her weight in dust, every day in the week. I don't know what I would do without my Angelina. I would give ye further performance, but she is tired and hongry, and I must look around fer some well-seasoned slop fer her to swill. See you later. Ta-ta!"

And with that he moved on up the street and disappeared around one of the hotels.

Immediately he was gone the crowd fell to discussing him, some still in a laughing mood over the antics of his trained pig, and one fellow declared:

"I tell ye what I think of that feller, boys. I think he himself is Deadwood Dick in one of the wonderful disguises we read about his puttin' on now and then when he has a job on hand."

"D'ye think so?"

"Don't et stand to reason? Hasn't he gone into many a place in jest about this fashion when he had a case ter work up?"

"That's so," others agreed.

"And then his askin' fer Deadwood Dick, that was only a blind ter put us off ther track. I tell ye he is Deadwood Dick, and that is all there is about et!"

"Et would be a joke on him ter make him onmask."

"So et would!"

"Let's do et! Let's show him that he can't foolish ther people of Creede, not a little bit!"

"Hooray! That is jest ther cheese, and we'll do et. As old Abe use' ter say, he kin fool some of ther people all ov ther time, and all of ther people some of ther time, but he can't fool all ov ther people all ther time."

"That's what's ther matter! Come on, boyees, and we'll have some fun wi' him and make him own ther corn and treat. Et will be fun, an' he won't git on his ear about et when he sees et's only fun. Come on, an' we'll take some of ther consait out of ther great Richard, b'gosh."

"Anything ter keep our blood movin' and ther town growin'. Oh, I tell ye we aire the people, after all! With a weddin' last night and a funeral this mornin', and now a visit from ther great renowned Richard— Why, pards, we aire right in et, clean up to our chins! Come along, pards, and we will bring Deadwood Dick to time and enjoy a treat at his expense!"

And away they started, a crowd of the rougher element of the youthful city.

They found Reginald Gustavo Spade behind the hotel around which he had disappeared. He was munching a sandwich that he had begged or bought, while the fair Angelina was exploring the contents of a swill bucket.

"Hillo!" they greeted him. "Hyar ye be, hey?"

"As you see," answered the old fellow, with mouth crammed full.

At the same time the pig lifted its head long enough to grunt, but resumed business immediately.

"Well, we have come to make ye a call."

"So?"

"You bet it's so."

"What do you want? What kin we do fer ye?"

"We have come ter see ye onmask, that is all; we want to see ye as ye ar', d'ye savvy?"

"Nary a savvy, boyees; don't know what ye aire talkin' about."

"You said ye wanted to find Deadwood Dick, didn't ye?"

"Yes; have ye found him?"

"We think we have."

"Bully! Come, Angelina, don't make a blame hog of yerself; we must go and see ther greatest detective on airth!"

The pig grunted, but refused to leave the feast.

The man pulled at the rope. The pig squealed, but refused to let go. The man gave a jerk, and over came the swill bucket, deluging the piggie fore and aft, so to express it.

"Sarves ye right!" the man cried. "L'arn to let go when I tell ye. That is the worst of a hog, never knows when it has had enough. Jest like some men I have heard of. A nice lookin' young lady you aire now, I must say! Lead ther way, boyees; we aire ready."

The crowd had laughed, and were laughing still, keeping well out of the way of the pig.

Just now it was about as unsavory a porker as was ever seen—or smelled, and no one wanted to come into contact with it. The pig, however, seemed to seek companionship.

"Yas, and we aire ready, too," said the spokesman for the crowd. "Take off them 'ar' whiskers."

"Do what?" in greatest amazement.

"Take off them 'ar' whiskers. Can't ye onderstand plain English?"

"And what ther merry mischief would I take off my whiskers fer? And what would I take 'em off with?"

The crowd laughed heartily.

"That is good, blamed good, hang me ef

et ain't!" cried the spokesman. "But this hyar is Creede, and you can't fool us, you bet!"

"And who is tryin' to fool ye?" asked the old man. "Ef you have set out ter have some fun wi' me, I s'pose you will have et, so wade right in, but spare my whiskers ef ye please."

Again they guffawed.

"You aire a artist at et, no mistake," complimented the spokesman, "but we want ye to know that we aire onto you, and et will be your treat. Come, now, off with them whiskers and show yerself as ye really aire, and then we will crook our elbows at your pay-up."

"Angelina, did ye ever see sech a set of consarned loonyticks in your life?" the old fellow appealed to the pig. "I never did, that's the fact."

And the pig squealed, as if supporting that view.

"Ef ye aire bound ter have my whiskers I suppose ye will have 'em, anyhow, so fetch along a pair of shears," the man invited. "I hate ter lose 'em, fer et is delightful to have the wind blow through them on a breezy day, but ef you aire dyin' to denude me of 'em, come on with yer choppers."

"Et won't do, Deadwood Dick," declared the spokesman. "You can't fool us any longer. Take 'em off and then we'll accept your treat. Let's lose no more time over et."

"Wh—wh—what is that ye call me?" the old fellow asked.

"What do we call ye? We call ye Deadwood Dick, and ye might jest as well come out of ye'r shell and own ther corn."

"Haw! haw! haw!" the old fellow laughed, holding his sides as if to keep from splitting. "Ef this hyar don't beat my time, then I'm a sinner! Deadwood Dick—me! Haw! haw! haw!"

They would not take his word for it; they fell upon him, almost pulled his whiskers out by the roots in their vain endeavor to pull off a false beard, as they were impressed that it must be, and when at last they were convinced of their mistake, they ruthlessly kicked him out of town in their chagrin.

But, in the melee Angelina had managed to clean well her coat against their many legs, and finally the old man shook off the dust from his shoes as a testimony against them.

He turned his face toward Denver, and we shall see him again.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN AMAZED DETECTIVE.

When Deadwood Dick bowed and left the room and found the butler waiting just outside the door, he said to the man:

"Mrs. Roh directs that you conduct me through the house, so we will begin without delay, if you please."

The man bowed.

"Where will you begin, sir?" he asked.

"In the room where the crime was done, if you do not mind. We will go there first."

"It is all the same to me, sir; it is as you say. This way, sir."

Dick had an object in this. If the man suspected him, he wanted to remove all doubt from his mind, if he could. He had a delicate task, and therefore a reason for wanting to win the man's confidence.

Reaching the apartment, Dick had the butler tell him again all about the finding of the knife and handkerchief in the fireplace.

"There is something strange about all this," Dick mused.

"What is strange about it?" the butler asked.

"It looks to me like a woman's work, hiding the knife in such a place as this."

"It can't be that you suspect—"

"I suspect nobody until proof indicates some one, my man. But a woman is apt to select some such place as this for a temporary place of concealment, and how could she foresee that accident would reveal it so soon?"

"It would be bound to be found some time."

"No; she would have removed it to a safer place as soon as she had opportunity to do so."

"Well, you ought to know; I don't pretend to understand anything about such matters. But you would not for a moment suspect Mrs. Roh of the crime, would you?"

"Why do you mention her?"

"She occupied the room, and— But the knife belonged to the son; you must not lose sight of that."

"That is so, and if he did the deed and wanted to throw suspicion upon some one else, this is the very kind of place in which he would conceal the weapon. You may be right."

"The knife makes it look suspicious, anyhow."

"But Harmon Roh is a man of average sound sense, is he not?"

"Why, yes, I suppose so; why do you ask such a question as that of me?"

"His leaving a knife with his own initials upon it does not show a very long head; that is all."

The man gave Dick a keen look, but did not make any comment upon that point. The detective was reading him without letting it be seen that he was doing so, for he was not greatly pleased with the fellow.

Dick inspected the room as if he had never seen it before.

From there he went to other parts of the house, and at last he and the butler again entered the little room on the first floor.

"Well, so much for the search," Dick observed, "and nothing accomplished. I would like to have a little chat with you, now, Mr. Barlow, if you don't object to that."

"Anything you please, sir," was the willing acquiescence.

"Very well; answer a few questions, then. Did you find the house well secured this morning after the murder?"

"The hall door was open, but Mrs. Roh said that she had opened it, and of course she did. She ran out on the street and gave the alarm, and pulled some fellow into the house."

"I have heard about that. She was greatly excited, I suppose."

"Actually crazy."

"She did not remember whether the door of her room was locked or not, I believe."

"So she said, and I suppose it was the truth—in fact, no reason to doubt it. But it must have been unlocked, of course, or the murderer would have been caught there."

"Then you suppose that he was hid in the room?"

"That is my theory."

"And that he opened the door and went out, and quietly let himself out of the house?"

"That is it, exactly, sir. But, of course, there is lots of room for me to be mistaken. If it was young Roh, there is no doubt about his way of doing it, and it is my opinion he was the man."

"Have you any good reason for thinking so?"

"I think I have."

"What is it?"

"Search has been made for Mr. Roh's will, and it cannot be found, and I know he had one."

"How do you know it?"

"Because I was one of the witnesses who signed it when it was made, and I

happen to know that it would be to his interest to have that will out of the way."

"He had been cut off?"

"Every cent was left to Mrs. Roh."

"Well, there is a motive, certainly. I am much obliged to you, Barlow, and rather like you. You are an observing man. I will now see Mrs. Roh again, as I promised, and then take my leave."

He returned to the room where the lady was and rapped.

She bade him enter, and he opened the door and stepped in, finding her in the same listless mood in which he had left her.

"Did you find anything?" she asked.

"There are indications that Mr. Roh's son did the deed," Dick answered.

"It is, then, as I feared, sir. It is too bad; I had rather given up everything to him than that he should have done such a crime."

"I have no doubt of it, madam. But, if guilty, why would he take steps to fix the crime upon himself? That is one point that I cannot see clearly. I do not see why he left his knife where it could be found."

"I do not know; I suppose he was afraid it would be found on his person."

"Maybe that was it. But it was sure to be discovered some time."

"No doubt he expected to remove it himself, when he became master of the house, as would naturally follow."

"You may be right. But, madam, I must be frank with you and tell you that certain ones of the police have their eyes upon you, and think that you are possibly guilty."

"I! Oh, monstrous!"

"You were in the room; your sleeve had blood on it—"

"The second time you have mentioned that fact. How came you to know there was blood on my sleeve?"

"The man whom you pulled into the house, when you made the discovery, saw it. Then, too, it was strange you did not waken when the deed was done, for your husband—"

"Cease! Cease! I beg of you! I cannot bear to hear it spoken of. Do you for one moment imagine that I could do a deed like that? And, if I could, do you suppose I could remain for hours in the room with my victim? In God's name, sir, can you believe it of me?"

"I do not believe it of you," said Dick, earnestly. "I believe you are innocent."

"Then save me, save me, I beg of you!"

She threw herself suddenly upon her knees before him, lifting her hands toward him imploringly. It rather took him by surprise, for he was looking for no such demonstration.

"Get up, lady," Dick ordered, taking hold of her hands to assist her. "I am here to punish the guilty, not the innocent. Fortunate that no one else saw this exhibition of weakness on your part. Why do you ask me to save you? Are you in danger?"

"Oh! if I could only tell you, sir. My husband suspected me, much as I loved and honored him, and if that were known it might hang me. Sir, I throw myself upon your mercy, declaring my entire innocence, and begging you to save me. My husband had taken steps against me, and I was living in the dread that false accusers would rise—I am in horror of one man, even now."

"And who is that man?"

"His name is Deadwood Dick, Junior!"

CHAPTER IX.

DICK MAKES PROGRESS.

Dick was amazed.

But it opened the way for what he had wanted to come at.

He desired to learn why Mr. Roh had

sent for him, and had been watching for some way in which to bring the matter around.

"Why do you fear that man?" he asked.

"I have heard of Deadwood Dick as the unrelenting foe of the guilty, but as the friend of the innocent and oppressed every time."

"He will consider me the former."

"And why?"

"Because my husband sent for him to look into my past and gain evidence against me—I am sure it must have been that."

"And he has not come?"

"No; my husband looked for him hourly."

"He had told you—"

"No, no; he did not know that I knew it. I learned of it secretly, and I lived in constant dread of his coming."

"Then perhaps there is something in your past, madam, that you would not care to have known, and, if so, the appearances against you are still more damaging, for some might say that you killed your husband to stop the inquiry."

"That is the very thing I live in dread of, sir. But, having cast myself upon your mercy, I am ready to tell you everything, for I must have help and you are the one to help me. I like your sincere manner, and I feel that I can trust you."

"Well, madam, you can. I will do all in my power for you, for, as I have told you, I believe you innocent."

"Then shall I confess everything to you?"

"Wait. What if this Deadwood Dick should come this moment, what would you do? What would be your attitude toward him?"

"I had made up my mind to cast myself upon his mercy, the same as I have felt forced, in my weakness, to throw myself upon yours. I thought perhaps he would believe me and befriend me."

"Would you inform him of the business for which your husband had called him?"

"Yes, yes, if he would promise to aid me."

"Very well; I am Deadwood Dick!"

With a cry the woman was upon her feet, staring at him wildly.

"You!" she exclaimed.

"Yes."

And, to make the surprise still greater, Dick removed his disguise and lo! it was the man she had dragged into the house that morning!

Speechless with amazement, the woman could only stare at him.

"You see, I have reason to believe you innocent," Dick remarked. "You were first seen by me, after your discovery of the murder, and there was no acting in what you said and did."

"God knows I scarcely knew what I was doing."

"You speak the truth; I know that. Let me reassume my disguise, for I do not want any one else to know who I am, and you must give no hint of it. We will continue in low tones, too."

"Yes, whatever you say, sir. Oh! I am glad it is you; I have heard of you, and my heart trembled with fear at the thought of your being against me, but now that you are for me I have peace. You have only to command me, and I will do your bidding in all things."

"Then you may now tell me your story."

Dick had put on his disguise again, and had Barlow opened the door he would have seen the same man he had admitted into the house, and whose acquaintance he had formed.

The woman looked down at the floor several minutes before she spoke at all, and when she did speak it was with gaze still averted.

"I hardly know where or how to begin," she declared, "for, indirectly, I have been the cause of my husband's death. Had I never entered his home, his son would never have killed him."

"But you cannot blame yourself for that, madam."

"Yes; it was wrong that I accepted his love, for he was old enough to be my father, and the son hated me with good cause. I should have married—"

"Whom?"

"No matter, that has nothing to do with what I did. I married Mr. Roh; he loved me, and I learned to love him dearly, for he was all that was good and kind, but the son hated me, and my presence made the father bitter against him. You can see how it was."

"And still I say that you have no reason to blame yourself."

"Nevertheless, I do blame myself. But hear me further, for I must tell all; no half story will do. When I married Mr. Roh I had another lover, a younger man, who loved me, but whom I did not love in return, and it was partly to escape him that I wedded Mr. Roh. He threatened to ruin my happiness if I did not wed him, and I feared him and sought protection."

"This grows interesting," said Dick.

"It has been the nightmare of my existence, sir. You can have no just conception of the torture it has caused me. The more I came to love my husband, the greater became my horror that Gilman Spencer would do something to rob me of his affection or make him think me false to him, and sure enough he did. He began to come near the house, at times when Mr. Roh was certain to see him, when he would hurry away in a guilty manner. And in other ways, too, he gave grounds for suspicions."

"And your husband?"

"He knew the man had been my lover, and he took me to task. I declared my entire innocence and begged him to believe me, and for a time I thought he did—perhaps he really did, for he never mentioned it again, but then at last came the knowledge that he had sent for you—"

"And how did you gain that?"

"It does not matter; not worth the telling. I kept it to myself, and lived in dread of your coming, innocent though I was. I did not know what Gilman Spencer might not be able to make you believe, and I trembled. I did not know what lie he would invent, and furnish proof for it, for he is a demon when he sets his heart and mind to work. But, thank Heaven, you are here, and you have said that you will be my friend and try to save me."

"Yes, I repeat the promise," said Dick.

"That is the whole story, sir."

"Did your husband let you know that he was expecting me? That is, did he say he was expecting any one?"

"Yes, we knew that he was expecting a Mr. Gardner."

"I am the Mr. Gardner."

"As I am aware, now. The butler was instructed to admit you into the house at any hour, day or night."

"Yes, I know. I was on my way here when you rushed out and called me to come in, and you can imagine what a surprise that was for me. But no word of any kind was left with any one?"

"No; but—"

"Mr. Roh was not young, and he must have realized that life was uncertain. If what he wanted to see me for was important, he was taking some risk, although no one would have imagined that he would come to such an end as he did. Perhaps he left some message with the butler?"

"No, no; I am sure he did not. I was going to tell you—I have found something."

"What is it?"

"In searching for the will I found this."

She held up a large envelope, strongly sealed with wax, and on which was written:

ANDERSON GARDNER.

Dick took the envelope from her hand and immediately opened it, drawing out some old papers and with them a letter which was addressed to him in his true name.

He examined them all before he said anything, and when he had done he gave them all back to the woman that she might see them, saying as he did so:

"You see your fears were groundless, and that your husband had faith in you. He wanted me for another matter altogether. He has a brother, whom he wanted me to find, if living, or his descendants, if dead, in order that he might make restitution and reparation for a wrong done in the past."

"I see, and it was like him. He was a good, true, and honorable man, after I knew him, and I would that his son were more like him. Not that I ever knew anything really bad of Harmon before this, but now—"

"Do not lay this crime longer at his door," said Dick, "for he is innocent, as innocent as you are."

"Can it be possible?"

CHAPTER X.

McTURK ON HIS EAR.

Deadwood Dick and this woman now understood each other.

But that was all; neither yet understood fully the mystery with which they were dealing.

Light, however, was beginning to dawn for Deadwood Dick, and nothing had been lost upon him of the story the woman had told. He had now something upon which to work.

Assuring the woman of his belief in the innocence of Harmon Roh, Dick went on to say:

"But I cannot prove it, nor can I prove your own, as yet. If you are further suspected, and by any chance arrested, there is one thing I want you to observe."

Her face blanched.

"What is that?" she asked.

"I want you to keep secret all that has passed between us."

"I will do that, sir."

"It must not be known that I am Deadwood Dick, nor must it be known that I have received this paper from you. Let matters take their course, and I will bring everything out all right in the end."

"But, sir—"

"What is it?"

"Suppose something happens to you, suppose you are killed, for you lead a life of constant danger."

"That may happen, true enough. Well, if I am not on hand at the final moment, when danger is greatest for you, then of course tell the whole story and do the best you can."

"But, if alive, you will not fail me?"

"I will not."

"Then I am not afraid. I will submit to arrest, and to imprisonment, if need be, and will trust you for all."

"That is all I can ask, and I will pull you safely through, if danger comes upon you. But I take it that Harmon is the one who will have to defend himself the hardest."

"You think he will be arrested?"

"I am sure he will. A man has already set out upon his trail, and he will be brought back to Denver a prisoner."

"Then I beg of you do whatever you can for him, sir, if you believe him innocent, as you say. And that will, if it is

found, I will destroy it, and let him have whatever the law would give him—rather, will accept whatever it will give me, and be satisfied."

Some further words, and Dick took his leave.

He had incidentally learned more about the man Gilman Spencer, where he lived, and so forth.

It was his intention now to find him, if possible, for, after what he had heard, his detective mind connected him with the matter more than incidentally. There seemed good ground for suspicion.

Mrs. Roh had described the man so well that Dick felt he would have but little trouble in recognizing him.

He went first to the place where the man lived.

"No, he is not at home," was said in response to his inquiry. "What did you want with him, sir?"

"I am here to see him upon a matter of business of much importance to him," Dick answered. "If you can say when he will be at home, or can tell where I will be likely to find him, you will do him a service."

"Who are you?"

"My name is Anderson Gardner."

"Well, he is now in Creede, sir, where he has mining interests."

"In Creede, eh?"

"Yes."

"And you have no idea when he will return?"

"No, sir."

"Is his wife at home?"

"Why, he has no wife, sir; he is single!"

"Oh! my mistake. I did not know, of course. You are his housekeeper?"

"Yes, sir."

"I see. Well, let me see, how can I arrange it? I am likely to miss him on the way if I go to Creede to find him. I'll tell you: If he comes home before I can see him, tell him I have gone to Creede and will remain there until I hear from him. You will not forget the name?"

"I will remember, sir."

So it rested, and Dick had gained a point and planted a seed at one and the same time.

From there he went immediately to the saloon of McTurk, removing his disguise at a convenient place en route, and when he entered the saloon the proprietor recognized him at once.

"Come here; Oi want to spake wi'd ye," McTurk said, motioning him to the end of the bar where others would not hear.

"What is it?" Dick asked, joining him.

"Phwy didn't ye tell me all about it?"

"All about what?"

"Phwat yez wanted wi'd young Roh."

"All we wanted then was to know where to find him."

"Oi know it, worse luck. And av Oi had known phwat yez wanted him fur, it was divil a wurrud yez would have got out av McTurk!"

"And that ought to answer your question, my man."

"How is that?"

"If you had known our hand you would not have come in."

"Divil a truer wurrud ye never spoke," averred the Irishman. "Oi would not dhat same."

"You have heard all about it now, I take it?"

"Ye take it just roight. But, by dhe rod av Aaron Oi don't belave dhe lad done it at all."

"How can you help it, with all the proof there against him? But maybe you have not heard all the particulars?"

"Oi have only heard dhat dhe ould man has been murdered, and dhat dhey suspect dhe lad av it."

"Well, he was in town last night, and

you saw him here this morning with blood on his hand—"

"And Oi wish dhe devil might have flew away wi'd me before ever Oi mentioned dhat same!"

"Too late now, McTurk."

"Oi know it is."

"And then a knife that belonged to him was found in the house, stained with blood and wrapped in a handkerchief. Then, again, the old man's will is missing, and that points direct at the son, for it seems that everything was willed to the young wife, and the son was cut off with nothing. With the will out of the way, he will get the lion's share."

"As he should, begob! Oi don't belave in young wives fur ould men, whin it is goin' to rob childher, begorra! Maybe it was dhe wife hersel' done dhe deed, to get rid av dhe man and come into his money."

"I hardly think so."

"Phwy not?"

"Her grief is genuine, seems to me."

"Divil trust her! Sure, a woman can play it off foine."

"Then you believe Harmon innocent?"

"Oi do thot!" emphatically.

"Well, can you do anything toward proving him so? That is the important point, if you are his friend."

"Oi only wush thot Oi could, sor."

"Can you advance anything to show that the wife is guilty?"

"Divil a thing at all at all! But phwat are ye quizzing me at dhis rate fur, sor?"

"Because, like you, I do not believe that Harmon Roh is guilty of his father's murder, and I am going to prove him innocent if I can do it."

"Bedad! here is me hand on thot!" said McTurk, extending his hand over the bar.

"And av Oi can be av any use to ye, ye have only to command me. Oi want ye to know dhat Harmon Roh is a white man every inch."

CHAPTER XI.

THE STRANGE MEETING.

"Angelina, et won't do! You have got to stop that theer dod-rotted hog foolishness, or take a dod-rotted blamed good lickin'!"

So voiced Reginald Gustavo Spade, stopping short to argue the point with his trained pig, which had evinced an inclination neither to lead nor be led, but seemed rather inclined to do about as it pleased.

The time was forenoon and the place some miles out of Denver on one of the highway trails.

They had traveled far since we saw them last.

"I tell you et won't do, Angelina, and that settles it. You'd orter be ashamed ov yerself to carry on so; a nice young lady like you be! What aire ye thinkin' about, anyhow? No, we won't go that theer way at all; our road is straight ahead, b'gosh!"

He gave a jerk on the string that was tied to the pig's hind leg, and sent the meager porker rolling over in the dust, squealing loudly.

"What is et ter be?" he demanded. "Will ye go right or will ye have ther lickin'?"

The piggie squealed the more trying to get up.

"Take ye'r choice," said the man. "Ef et is ther lickin' ye want, then by sprouts ye shell hev' et!"

He would not allow the pig to get up, and finally it ceased its struggles and lay over on its back with its legs in the air, as if dying.

"Is that a sign that ye give up?" Mr. Spade asked. "Ef et is, I'll be easy with ye and let ye down softly. Git up, now, and ef ye will march right along as ye'd orter et will be all right."

He allowed the pig to get up. "Now, then, straight ahead," the man ordered. "Et is Denver we want to go to, not to the deuce. What, aire ye boltin' a'ready?"

For a yard or two the pig had gone straight enough, but then of a sudden it darted off at right angles and made a break for the roadside, and the man had to pull hard on the string.

"Ef this hyar string should break, whar' would you be?" he cried. "Angelina, youe aire a fool! Hyar; tug on this fer a while, and see how ye like et," catching the pig by the neck with the crook of his staff. "Do ye think ye kin get away with that, and me, and ther hull bizness?"

That the pig evidently tried to do.

"I see," said the man, "you 'bjeet ter goin' to Denver, that's what's ther matter wi' you. But thar' ye aire a-goin', ef I have to take ye thar' a dead porker instead of a live one. And now I'll give ye what I promised ye, by darn, I will! I am goin' ter see ef any blamed hog kin run over me like you aire a-doin' and not suffer ther konsekenes."

He had landed the pig upon its back, and now he began to beat it soundly with his staff, while the pig squealed with all the power of its lungs.

"We'll see who will be master ov ther sittywashun, I'm thinkin'!" the man cried, as he laid on the blows. "I have been run over by two-legged hogs in my day, but I'll be everlastingly chawed ef I will let a little four-legged one like you git ther best of me! How d'ye like et, Angelina. D'ye think ye kin keep in the middle ov the road now, ef I let up? D'ye think ye kin, ye measly-looking shoat? Speak up, or by ther great goshamites ef I don't kill ye!"

"Hold on there! What in blazes are you doin' to that pig?"

Another actor upon the scene.

Mr. Spade looked up, to find himself face to face with a man on a horse, a young man rather roughly attired, with a face that showed recent dissipation.

"What in blazes am I doin' to ther pig?" repeated the owner of the porcine. "I am knockin' ther devil out of et, and I don't mean a figurative devil, either, by a long sight!"

"What for? What has the pig done?"

"Ther blamed thing won't go where I want et to, that's what, an' et would make a saint swear."

"Don't doubt your word a bit, old man. But did you ever know a hog that would go where it was wanted to go? I never did. Now, if you could only impress it upon that pig that you want it to go in every other direction but the way you really do want it to go, you will have no trouble."

"That is jest what I was tryin' to do when you broke in on ther proceedin's," said the old man.

"Then there is another way," suggested the young man.

"How is that?"

"Put the rope around its neck, and if it is a good strong one, all you have got to do is walk right ahead about your business. That pig will come after you or lose its head, one or the other."

"That ain't ther thing; et is Angelina's business ter lead, and she has got ter do et!"

"Angelina! You don't mean to say that is the pig's name?"

"That's what et aire, though."

"Ha! ha! ha! I know what is the matter with it, old man, if that is the case."

"Wull, what is the matter? Ef you kin tell me you will confer a favor, I declare. She ain't used ter cuttin' up like this,

and I don't know what ter make of et, b'gosh!"

"The pig is trying to get away from its name."

"I can't believe that, stranger, fer she has had et a good while, and ruther likes et. Ain't thet so, Angelina?"

For a few moments the pig had been sitting still, as if listening, and it nodded its head and gave a grunt, and the man on the horse looked at it with the greatest surprise.

"Hang me ef it don't seem to understand!" he exclaimed.

"Understand? Of course she understands. That is what makes et so mighty queer the way she's cuttin' up."

"By the way, where do you come from, anyhow? What are you doing with such a miserable-looking pig as that? There isn't an ounce of fat on it, from head to tail throughout."

"I opine you are right, stranger. Brainy hogs don't run much to fat, and Angelina is brainy ef she is anything. Why, she kin sing, dance, read, write, figger, and do a hull lot of other things that ther common run of hogs can't begin ter do, an' that is as straight as a string."

"You surprise me."

"But you asked me whar' I'm frum. I have come from Creede, a long and weary tramp of some days and nights, and I'm bound fer Denver."

"And the pig, what do you mean to do with that?"

"That pig is my livin'!" declared the old man. And he proceeded to tell in detail some of the wonderful things the pig could do.

While they were talking the sound of hoofs was heard and another horseman appeared around a bend a little distance away, and at sight of the two men he drew rein and came to a stop near them.

He was a fearless-faced man, keen eyed, and he looked sharply at the young man on the horse.

His hand rested upon a gun at his hip.

"Your name is Harmon Roh, I believe," he spoke, in a business-like manner.

"Well, what if it is?" retorted the other, fearlessly.

"You are my prisoner, that is all," the rejoinder, and a pistol was quickly drawn and leveled.

The young man turned pale, and the old fellow on foot looked on in something of surprise. He was heard to repeat the name the mounted detective had mentioned.

The new-comer was Jim Bronson.

"Your prisoner? Who are you? What do you arrest me for?"

"I am Jim Bronson, of Denver, and you are wanted to answer for the murder of your father, Marian Roh."

"My father dead—murdered?"

"Marian Roh?"

The young man exclaimed, while the other questioned dazedly.

"Yes, murdered, and you are supposed to have done it," the detective informed.

"Your knife has been found, you were in Denver last night, you left early this morning, and there was blood on your hand—it is a very strong case against you!"

"But I am innocent, I swear to you that I am innocent!" the young man exclaimed, earnestly. "I did not know that my father was dead."

"Of course he is innocent!" cried the old man with the pig. "A Roh might do a mean thing, and I hev' known them that has, but murder is somethin' out of their line, and I am ready to swear to et! Ain't I right, Angelina?"

And the pig sat up on its hind legs and squealed its approval.

CHAPTER XII.

WAS HE THE MAN?

First of all the detective attended to business.

Riding straight up to the man he held covered, he snapped a pair of handcuffs upon his wrists.

At the same time he had an eye upon the older man on foot, and was ready to deal with him if he showed any signs of trying to interfere with him in the discharge of his duty.

The younger man handcuffed, and the older one remaining inoffensive, the detective put away his gun.

Then he turned to the old fellow.

"What do you pretend to know about this matter, old man?"

"Don't know a thing about et, stranger, but I am a heap interested, and I want to know all about et."

"Is it true—is there not some mistake?" asked the young man. "Is my father dead? You have said that it is so, but it is hard to believe. Do you mean Marian Roh, of — Street?"

"No other, I assure you. And the less you have to say about it the better, it may be, for I shall have to repeat the story of this arrest, and you will gain or lose by that recital. Take the gentle hint and be guarded in what you say. Who is this man?"

"I had just met him when you came up," said the prisoner.

"I'm old enough ter introdoose myself," said the old man. "I am Reginald Gustavo Spade, and this hyar is my pig, Angelina."

"You spoke just now as if you might know Marian Roh."

"I use ter know a man by that name years ago, but whether this is the same one or not I can't say."

"And where are you from?"

"Creede."

"Where going?"

"To Denver."

"It won't be anything out of your way to accompany me, then, as you will have to do, anyhow. Two prisoners are better than one, and you may know something that will be of interest."

"And what about Angelina?" with alarm real or pretended.

"Bring the pig along, if you want to, but you have got to come, whether or not."

"D'ye hear, Angelina?"

The pig squealed and nodded.

"Thar' is one favor I would ask," the old man then said, soberly. "This hyar pig has taken it into her noddle that she won't go the way I want her to, and ef you will jest tie this string to your saddle and tow her along, you will confer a favor upon—"

"There, there, cork up and hand me the string. I'll tow the pig, as you call it, and you can get up there behind the other prisoner and ride. Are you armed, old man?"

"Never owned a gun in my life."

"Well, up with you, then, and we are off. No use wasting time here. We must get on to Denver."

And so they started, the prisoners both on one horse and the stubborn pig plowing up the dirt for some distance, as it braced itself on all fours to resist. But piggie soon got tired of that, and trotted along submissively, keeping up with the procession.

Of the journey we need say nothing. Let us bridge the interim, and enter Denver with them, a few hours later.

They attracted attention, naturally.

Jim Bronson, being without disguise, was recognized, and persons along the streets accosted him to inquire what he had there

Passing replies were made, and the detective pressed on to the central police station with his prisoners, where his coming was hailed with satisfaction by his chief.

"I knew you would get him," the chief said.

"I meant to, if it was in the wood," was the detective's reply.

"Have you searched him?"

"No, not yet."

"And who is this other?"

"I give it up. I found them both together, and thought I would scoop the pair."

"That was right; a pair is not to be sneezed at, sometimes."

"And right hyar's a pair that beats any three of a kind that you ever seen in your life," declared the old man, boastfully, indicating himself and his pig. "If you don't believe me ask Angelina."

"And who the deuce is Angelina?" asked the chief.

He looked around as if to find a girl or woman in the company, for quite a number of persons had pressed into the office.

"Who is Angelina? Right hyar she be, captain, and ther finest young lady of her kind that ever pleased yer eyes. She kin sing, dance, read, write, and do any number of cute things, both known and unknown. Do you want to see her perform?"

The old fellow raised a laugh.

He had taken the pig in with him, under his coat and under his arm, and now he put it down on the floor.

"No, I don't want to see it perform," cried the chieftain. "I want it got out of here quicker than lightning, though! Officer, fire that pig out into the street and let it run."

"Hold on!" cried the old man, catching it up and thrusting it under his arm again. "Don't you tetch my Angelina! She is bread and butter to me, and ef you take my pig you take my all. I will keep her quiet, boss, so go ahead with the show. She won't say peep."

The policeman looked at his chief.

"Well, never mind it this minute," said the latter. "We must see to our prisoner. What have you to say, young man?"

"I am informed that I am accused of the murder of my father," was the answer. "I am innocent of the crime. I did not know that he was dead until informed so by your detective."

"Very good; but can you prove an alibi?"

"I don't know. I want to see a lawyer before I say much about it."

"That is all right. I have no business to press you. But you must be searched, and you must not resist."

"I have no intention of doing anything of the kind, sir."

One of the headquarters detectives went through his pockets, producing a pistol, a pocket-knife, some keys, and a hundred dollars in money, besides a leather sheath that had evidently held a knife.

This appeared to be all, but presently the searcher declared there was something like a paper in the lining of the young man's coat, and proceeded at once to secure that. The prisoner evinced surprise, real or pretended, declaring he had not known any paper was there. It was soon forthcoming, and as soon as it was opened it was found to be the missing will of Marian Roh!

That there was a sensation then ought to go without saying.

Deadwood Dick, in disguise, was one of the number who had entered the office upon the detective's arrival.

He was interested in all said and done, and at this disclosure a smile moved his

lips for an instant, and he looked satisfied. He said nothing then, however.

"What have you to say to this?" the chief demanded.

"I did not know it was there," the prisoner declared.

"Have you any idea how it came there?"

"I have not."

"Here is blood on your sleeve."

"I know not how it came there. I found some on my hand this morning, too."

"Where did you spend the night?"

The prisoner named a resort of no savory repute, and said that he had there indulged more than was good for him and had been put to bed.

Further than that he remembered nothing until he was awakened at an early hour, as he had in the evening expressed his intention of setting out early on his return to Creede.

The examination was carried further, but nothing more of importance was gained.

The prisoners were locked up, and a detective went to the Roh residence, where it was found that one of the keys in the prisoner's possession fitted the front door of the house.

The knife found evidently was the one belonging to him, for it fitted the sheath that had been found on his person. In fact, he admitted that the knife was his. Later in the day he was examined and committed to prison. Old Spade was dismissed.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PARDS AT WORK.

During this time Deadwood Dick had remained incog.

After the examination he made himself known to Bronson, who was amazed that he had not guessed his identity before.

"I looked at you a hundred times," he said, "and how was it that I failed to get on to you, when I was looking for you and had you in mind? That is what sticks me now."

"Because I took pains not to let you recognize me," explained Dick. "When you saw me then my expression was something like this," changing his face instantly, "but now you see it in something of its natural repose. That is the difference, a very simple trick, you will admit."

"But one that only Deadwood Dick could play, all the same. I take off my hat to you, Richard."

"You needn't do so; you are famous enough."

"Well, let's drop it. What do you think now?"

"Let's drop around to McTurk's and have a chat over it."

In a few minutes they were seated in the Irishman's place.

No sooner had they entered than McTurk "went for" Jim, declaring that it had been unfair the way he had wormed him into telling what he knew about young Roh, and betting he would never do it again.

But he was easily mollified.

"And phwat d'ye think av dhe b'y?" he asked, as he filled an order for cigars.

"That is just what we have come here to decide," assumed Jim. "Sit down and be one of us, if you have the time."

"Dhat same Oi will, wi'd pleasure. Oi will take dhe toime."

So the three joined company and lighted their weeds.

"Now, Mr. Smith," proceeded Jim, addressing Dick, "we will let you talk first."

"You know what I think about it," said Dick.

"That he is innocent?"

"Yes; just that."

"But what are you going to do with all these proofs against him?"

"Why, find the guilty man and brush them all away!"

"Easier said than done," and Bronson shrugged his shoulders.

"Begorra! it must be done!" cried McTurk.

"That is the way to put it; it must be done," supported Dick.

"But think how damning the evidence is," urged Jim. "Here he has been taken almost red-handed, as it were."

"Too much red-handed," assumed Dick.

"Then you think—"

"That he is the victim of a scheme—exactly. This is a put-up job, and it is for us to get him out of his fix."

"What about the woman? It seems to lie between the two."

"She is as innocent, wholly so."

"You puzzle me entirely."

"I am puzzled myself, as yet," Dick admitted. "On those points, however, I do not think that I can be mistaken."

"Bedad! it is a jewel ye are!" cried McTurk. "Go ahead and prove thim up, and begorra it is my trate."

"I expect to do it, if the wheels stay on," asserted Dick. "Let us glance at it just a moment. Young Roh is no fool, and here are some things he would never have done. He would not have been seen in Denver last night. He would not have left his knife in that house. He would not have allowed blood to get upon him, or if it had he would have removed it. And, last and greatest, he would never have taken that will away upon his person. He would have destroyed it at the earliest possible moment."

"That is horse sense," agreed Jim.

"And then for the woman, she was too earnest in her excitement and grief to admit of doubt. There can be no question in my mind about her innocence. But it has got to be proven, and it is for you and me to prove it, Bronson. I have a scheme, if you will aid me in carrying it out."

"You have only to direct," assured Jim, in deep earnestness.

"Well, we must go together, in the best disguises we can assume, to the den where young Roh spent the night, and see what we can pick up there. It may be a little dangerous, but we are used to that sort of thing."

"That for the danger!" and Jim snapped his fingers.

"And whin shall Oi see yez again?" asked McTurk.

"Look for us at any time," answered Bronson. "We may want to use you."

"Begorra, yez can play me to dhe full limit, av it is workin' fur dhat young man yez are!"

"That reminds me," said Dick. "I am going to make an appointment with a man to meet me here later in the day, and if he comes I want you to detain him until I arrive."

"Oi will dhat same. Phwat is his name?"

"His name is Spade, and you will know him by the fact that he will have a pig with him."

"A pig wi'd him!"

"Yes; and you may be able to get some fun out of the pair while the man waits for me."

"All roight, sor; Oi will attind to thim."

Having arranged that, Dick took leave, in company with the Denver detective, and in due time they entered another resort.

This time it was one of a different order, and they were looked upon with suspicion until they had spent some money,

and had given enough proof that they were cowboys in town on a "tear."

"We aire lookin' fur a pard of our'n," explained Dick, presently, with the true plains twang, "and this is one of the places whar' he said we might round him up."

"A pard of your'n?" asked the fellow behind the bar.

"Yes; seen him?"

"Well, that is hard to tell, unless you give us his looks."

"Ruther good-lookin' chap, chestnut hair, and mustache to match; ruther a lee-tle seedy in trappin's, but all wool and a yard wide every time. His first name is Harm."

That was enough. Suspicion was awakened instantly.

The inmates of the place looked from one to another with ill-concealed alarm.

Everybody in Denver had heard of the murder, by this time, of course, and here of all places inquiry was enough to create a sensation, for here the accused man had spent the night.

"Wull, what's ther matter?" asked Dick.

"We don't know nothin' about him," the saloon man declared.

"That settles it, then. Why didn't ye say so? Must be that he hasn't got around this far yet. We'll wait."

"Don't see the use of waitin'," spoke up Jim.

"Why not?"

"No knowin' when he will round up hyar, and we will be losin' all the big sights of the town."

"I forgot this was your first visit to Denver, pard. Well, we'll wait a spell, anyhow, fer this hyar is a bang-up she-bang and the company is A1. Come! who will smile again?"

This speedily removed the suspicion, to a degree.

No doubt there had been a feeling that these two men must be detectives, having inquired for young Roh.

For a couple of hours they made jolly about the place, proving themselves a pair of the best hearted "galoots" in the world, and at the end of that time every bit of suspicion had been swept away.

They had thought it best to make no inquiry for Gilman Spencer, and to say nothing more that could create suspicion anew.

Finally they made ready to take leave.

"Well, we will drop around again," announced Dick. "Maybe our pard will be here by that time, and if he does come, just tell him to wait for us."

On this head they were assured, and so they went away, having gained nothing, but having at any rate assured themselves of a welcome if they chose to call again, which might be worth a good deal to them.

They parted company, with an understanding, and Deadwood Dick set forward for McTurk's place.

CHAPTER XIV.

FUN ALIVE AT MCTURK'S.

Meantime, when the man with the pig was set free, he stopped to look around him.

He had the pig under his arm, and was an object of much curiosity, in a place like Denver, naturally, and he felt lost and ill at ease.

"What aire we goin' ter do, now that we aire hyar, Angelina?" he inquired of his porcine companion. "Seems ter me we aire ruther in ther wrong pen, this time, and we had better git out."

The pig squealed.

"But we mustn't fergit the errant that brought us hyar, as we go along. We

aire lookin' fur ther great and only Deadwood Richard, and we must find him if it kin be done. In a town like this, somebody orter know somethin' about him, an' mebbly we kin pick up his trail ergain."

The piggie grunted assent.

"Not that ther matter is as 'portant as et was, fer by ther looks of things et ain't, but we may as well be on hand and put in our claim when the clean-up is made, hey, Angelina? But this ain't findin' Deadwood Dick, and I am muchly afeerd that we ain't likely ter find him. And ef so be, wull, we will scare up a lawyer who will no doubt boost our case along fer a share."

He had not spoken loud enough to be overheard.

About that time a stranger stepped up to him, and in a low tone, but very distinctly, said:

"You have come here looking for Deadwood Dick. I can read your secret. Do not speak, but pay attention. Be at the saloon of McTurk, No.— Street, at four o'clock this afternoon. Ask for Howard Smith, and wait there till he comes, if you have to wait all night. Do you understand?"

"I savvy."

"And you have got the name and number?"

"You bet."

"All right; don't forget."

The man was off at once, and the old fellow could only stare after him.

"Wull, I am clean blowed!" the old man exclaimed. "Ain't you blowed, too, Angelina? Who was that, and how did he know my thinks? Must 'a' been some akin to the old feller, I be bound!"

Simply explained. Dick had the cue from Bronson.

The old man had told the Denver detective of his mission on the way in, and had learned much he desired to know.

"But we'll be thar', eh, Angelina?" he declared. "We'll be thar', you kin bet we will, mister, whoever ye aire! Don't fergit ther name and ther number, Angelina."

The old fellow watched Dick until he was out of sight, making sure that he would know him again.

But would he? Dick was in the disguise that had puzzled Jim Bronson.

The man with the pig sauntered away, and we lose sight of him.

About half-past three in the afternoon, however, McTurk saw a man enter his place leading a pig.

He knew him at once as the man he had reason to expect, and greeted him by name before the man had a chance to speak up in his own behalf.

"How are ye, Mister Spade?"

The man with the pig stopped short. "How the deuce do you know my name?" he asked.

"By dhe looks av ye, sor," was the response. "Come and take something."

This the old fellow was nothing loth to do, and he stepped to the bar at once as invited.

"I want to find a man named Smith," he observed.

"Yis, Oi know, sor, and he will be here whin he comes, or sooner, if he can. Dhat same he tould me. You are to wait."

"I will wait, you bet, fer he has got my curiosity screwed clear up to high G. Will you take somethin' along wi' me, Angelina? You stick up that snout o' your'n in a wistful way."

"Does ye'r pig dhrink?" asked the proprietor.

"If ye have a pan of sour beer you can try her," said the owner of the porcine.

"Bedad, Oi will thot same, thin!"

The Irishman found a pan, filled it more

than half full of beer, and handed it over the bar to the owner of the pig.

Immediately the pig began to squeal, on seeing the pan, and it frisked around and wiggled its tail joyously, and those in the place gathered to enjoy the fun. It was something new and novel.

"Hyar ye aire, Angelina," said the old man, as he put the pan on the floor. "Jest dip ye'r snout into that, and see how et goes. I think et will tickle ye'r palate clear down to the roots of yer tail, I do, by chowder! Hold on! Great goshaway! Ye needn't go in over ye'r ears! But its jest like a blamed hog!"

The crowd around laughed.

The moment the pan touched the floor the pig had dived in, burying its snout to the full extent, while the old showman finished his own drink.

"Begorra, she does loike it, sure enough," averred the proprietor of the saloon.

"As well as some two-legged hogs I have known in my day," agreed the owner of piggie. "Ef that ain't hoggish, then I don't know what is. Ha! in goes both fore feet, jest as I expected. But that ther is a wise precaution, Angelina, fer thar' was danger that you would suck up pan and all ef ye didn't mind."

The crowd was enjoying it to the full.

"Thar', come now, Angelina," cried the owner, presently pulling the string. "Don't ye think ye have had about enough?"

But the pig held on like grim death, and as the owner pulled harder on the string, the porcine raised its head and its voice at the same time and let out a squeal in protest.

"L'ave her finish it!" cried McTurk. "Begorra, it is ye'rsel' that wouldn't want to be pulled away by dhe hind leg, is it not?"

"Mebby you aire right, Mr. McTurk."

"Begorra, it is betting Oi am thot Oi am!"

"Well, go in, Angelina, and make a blamed hog of ye'rsel' if ye want to, but don't blame me."

And the pig did go in, and did not stop till the pan was empty and she had rooted it over and spilled the last drops on the floor, when she grunted in a satisfied manner.

The crowd laughed its approval, and some bets were immediately paid.

Some had bet that the pig would not finish the beer, others that it would, and the latter had won.

"Finish et!" cried the owner of the homely thing. "She would 'a' finished it if it had been a bar'l. But come, Angelina, you have had your fill, now you have got to sing a song."

"Sing!" some exclaimed.

"You bet she kin sing!" cried the owner, fishing his harmonica out of his pocket. "Set up thar' like a lady, Angelina!"

The pig sat up on its hams and crossed its fore legs, as we have seen before, and when the man began to play the harmonica it began to let out a prolonged squeal.

Not only so, but it primped and aired most killingly—as a person of female persuasion might put it, and the crowd fairly held their sides with laughter while they looked on and listened. It was something no one of them had ever seen before, and all enjoyed it.

"How was that?" cried Spade, when he ceased playing. "Ain't she got jest a prime voice fer opera?"

"That's what she has, old man!" some one agreed.

"And she kin dance, too, you bet!"

"Let's see et! We may as well have ther 'hull show as half, don't ye say so, boys?"

"That's what's ther matter!"

"But my livin' is at stake," informed the owner. "This is the way I corral my grub, and if you won't object to my passin' the hat—"

"That's all right, old man; pass it around and we'll fill et chock full clear up to ther brim! This is the best show that has struck Denver in a dog's age, and we are goin' ter see et out!"

So the old fellow passed his hat and got a good return, and the pig performance was carried on. But by this time piggie was beginning to get heavy at one end and light at the other, owing to the beer, and that increased the fun tenfold; and when it was at its height Deadwood Dick entered.

The pig was dancing, or trying to, but it was staggering this way and that, and suddenly it went down all in a heap and refused to stir.

CHAPTER XV.

DICK INTERVIEWS SPADE.

"I guess the performance is over," remarked Deadwood Dick.

"Yes, I guess et aire, too," agreed Mr. Spade. "Angelina has reached that state which few pigs reach in life; that is ter say, corned."

The crowd laughed at the remark, easily tickled after having laughed so long and so heartily, and the owner of the porcine dragged the animal out of the way by the string to its leg.

That done, he glanced up at the clock.

"Et's about time that ther man was showin' up, ain't et?" he inquired of Mc-Turk.

"Sure, he is roight on hand, sor," Mc-Turk responded. "Dhis is dhe gintleman, sor; and it is plazed to mate and know ye he will be, Oi am si'e."

He introduced them by motions of his hands, the one to the other, merely.

"Mr. Spade?" asked Dick.

"That is my handle," the old man answered.

"And mine is Smith. I am the man you are looking for, Mr. Spade."

Mr. Spade looked at him keenly, trying to recognize in him the man who had spoken to him before and made the appointment.

That, however, he could not do, and he gave it up with a shake of his head. The other must have been a brother or first cousin of this one, he mentally decided; it was certainly not the same man.

Dick ordered something he thought the old fellow might relish, and they sat down by a table.

"I understand on pretty good authority," said Dick, then, "that you are on the lookout for a man named Deadwood Dick."

"Wull, ye hev' come purty nigh to makin' a bull's-eye," the old fellow acknowledged. "He is ther chap I am after. Do you know where he is?"

"I can put you on his trail."

"Well, do that, then."

"I must know something about what you want him for, first."

"That ain't none of your business."

"Maybe not, but it is like this: If you want to find him to lodge a lead pill into him, I won't—"

"No, no; et ain't nothin' like that, Smithy. I have got a case fer him and I want his help. That is ter say, I did have, but et now looks as ef et had run to seed."

"A case concerning yourself?"

"Yes."

"What was it?"

"Now you are gittin' down to ther quick ag'in."

"Well, I am Deadwood Dick, the man you wanted to find," in whisper.

"Yer don't say!"

"Yes, I am the man."

"Wull, I be durn!"

"You are surprised?"

"I be, fer a fact."

"What is it surprises you?"

"I expected ter find a feller bristlin' all over wi' knives an' guns, an' hyar you be jest like ary other man."

Dick had to smile.

"And I am only an ordinary mortal, after all," he declared. "But, now that you have found me, make known your business with me, and then maybe I have some business with you."

The old vagabond looked alarmed.

"Don't get scared," Dick added. "Maybe your slate isn't quite clean, but I am not going to call you to account for that. The business I have with you may be to your benefit. But I can't be sure of that till I have heard your story and know more about you."

"Then you want me to show down first?"

"Just that."

"All right. Jest wait a minnit."

The old fellow began to go into his clothes as if in search of a secret pocket.

Finding it, he drew out a pocketbook that was as flat as if the fabled elephant had stepped on it, and opening that he took out a very small newspaper clipping.

"Right hyar is ther 'hull business of et," he asserted, holding it up between his thumb and finger. "Right hyar on this bit ov paper. So small ye can't hardly see et without yer specks, mebbly, but right hyar et is. Now, ef ther 'hull story was hyar, et would tell its own tale, but et ain't."

He handed it to Dick, then.

It was a newspaper clipping, as said, and it had been a personal advertisement.

There was no date to it, and the signature was gone. What there was of it read as follows:

"If the only brother of Marian Roh would hear of something to his advantage, let him communicate with the said brother. A mistake of the past can—"

And that was all.

"Ye see how short and how blamed doosedly sweet et aire," the old fellow made remark.

"Yes, it does come up with something of suddenness," assented Dick. "Have you lost the rest of it?"

"Never had it," said the old fellow.

"Ha! that puts it in another light, then."

"And that is jest what I wanted of Deadwood Dick. See? I want to find out what paper this was printed in, and what address was signed to it."

"Then you did not know what paper it was in?"

"No; it was only a scrap when I found it, jest as you see it now."

"Well, now to the point: Are you Marian Roh's brother? Are you the man this calls for?"

"Goshaway! Does my name spell anything like that one?"

"No; but a name more or less does not come high here in the West. What we trade on is fact."

"Well, then, the fact in this case is that I ain't ther party. Sidney Roh was a pard of mine, in the days past, though, and I know all about him."

"Where is he now?"

"Well, I'll say he is dead. Ef he ain't he'd orter be, even ef he was my pard."

"Then he was not the right sort?"

"He was too blame right fer his own good. But that is of time past, and let et rest. But, blazes! what is ther use tryin' ter foolish Deadwood Dick?"

"Not much, I guess you will find, Sidney Roh."

"I own ther corn, neighbor. Now, what is ther outcome of et all? I hear that Marian Roh is dead."

"You know he is, you mean."

"What der you mean? Yer wouldn't think thet I killed him?"

"No, but you were present when his son was arrested, and you got a dose of the same medicine."

"Goshaway! That wasn't you, too, was it?"

Dick had to smile.

"No, I am not quite such an artist at disguises as all that, Mr. Roh," he said.

"Call me Spade," the old man requested. "I was the black sheep of the family, and I dropped the name long ago, so as not to bring disgrace on the rest."

"That young man looks something like you."

"He's a black sheep, too, by the looks of things. But, durn et, it ain't his fault; it is only 'cause his dad didn't understand him."

"How was that?"

"Well, take my own case. My dad was bent that I should be a preacher. I was bent that I would be a showman or nothin'. He was sot, and so was I, and as a result I took a middle course and went to the dogs."

"And how does that apply in this case?"

"I don't know, but you will find that it does apply all the same, I bet on it. Now, if my dad had set me up in the line I longed for, I would have made a respectable showman, but he didn't, and the outcome of it all is that I am trampin' the country with a trained pig at my heels."

"Well, it looks as if there may be something in what you say. But that is foreign to our present business."

"Somethin' in et? Thar' is dead loads in et! Sence all boys can't be presidents, the big majority have got ter be somethin' else, and ef dads would see et in that light— But you called me ter order."

CHAPTER XVI.

DEADWOOD DICK SURPRISED.

The old fellow cut his sermon promptly short.

Dick had hinted that there was something else to be talked about, and the hint was enough.

"Having admitted that you are Sidney Roh," Dick added, then, "you are aware that your brother is dead. This advertisement was no doubt inserted by him, and the paper was a Denver publication."

"That is the way et looks, pardner, sure enough. But you see how onpossible et was fer me to find that out, by myself, and so I was lookin' fer you ter help me through with et. But, hyar we aire, at ther end of ther trail, and brother has cashed in his chips."

"Before doing so, he sent for me."

"Fer you? What fer?"

"To find you for him."

"Ther doose ye say! But, why not, sence his paper notice failed to fetch me? What did he say?"

"He was a dead man when I got here."

"Then et is all up, and I'll never know what he wanted. Too bad, fer I didn't hold no grudge ergainst Marian; et was all dad's doin's, and as I was the black sheep anyhow—"

"Tell me all about it."

"What is the use?"

"You shall see."

"Well, you know what you aire a-talkin' about, I opine. Et was like this: Dad was well off in this world's goods and chattles. He had two boys, Marian and me. Marian was the goody-goody chap; I was the scapegoat cuss. Dad left all to him and nothin' to me. Same old story."

I wanted Marian to give me a lift, but he refused. He said it was his duty to carry out our father's will. I s'pose mebbly et was, but it was a pleasant duty all the same."

"I see."

"Well, callin' Marian a name that was somethin' akin to Angelina thar', I dusted out to shake fer myself, and I have been shakin' ever sence. I lost sight of every relation I had in the world, and cared nothin' fer them, believin' that they cared nothin' fer me, and the first thing I heard from any one of them was this notice that I found on this scrap of paper, found by merest chance, and naturally et set me to thinkin' about times past, and I thought I would look into et if I could. But I was buckin' ag'in' a dead wall."

"Well, you have reached the end."

"And what is ther benefit?"

"Your brother has deeded to you one of the richest mines in Creede, to go to you if you can be found inside of five years. Every effort was to have been made to find you, and, failing, then the mine would go to a worthy charity here in Denver."

"Great goshaway!"

"That is the sum and substance of it."

"And what is the name of that mine?"

"The Susan Jane."

"Screamin' wildcats!"

"What is the matter now?"

"That is ther very mine some fellers out thar' aire tryin' ter steal!"

"You don't say so?"

"I do, though, and right out 'loud, too! Give me my papers and let me go back thar' and astonish ther natives!"

"You shall have them, but some forms of law have to be gone through first. We will see to that; then you will want to look at your dead brother, I suppose, before he is laid away."

"Wull, yes," sadly. "Et will be like lookin' at a stranger, I s'pose, but Marian and me was boys together, and I have a feelin' fer him still. Yes, I must do so, I opine. But, goshaway! they would never own me, in this kind o' dress; and as fer Angelina—"

"You will have to fit yourself out anew and appear like a gentleman, and you will have to give up the pig, of course—"

"Give up Angelina? Never! That pig has stuck to me through thick and thin, mostly thin, fer three long years, and I won't turn et loose in a cold, hard world at this late day."

"Well, we may be able to get McTurk here to take care of it for a while for you and you can come and get it later on."

"That is different; but I'll never desert Angelina!"

"Your brother left some papers and a letter for me, in case anything happened to him before my coming," Dick then further explained, "and it was fortunate he did so. It looked as if he had had a thought that his time was near its closing. Be that as it may, the papers came into my hands all right, and I hold them for you. There is the deed, and a codicil that makes the matter all straight for you. Besides, here is a sealed letter for you."

Dick had taken from his pocket, while speaking, the envelope he had received from Mrs. Roh, and from that had taken another envelope, which he now delivered.

Sidney Roh took it and opened it with trembling fingers.

Dick said nothing, but watched.

The man took out the sheet which the envelope contained, opened it, and began to read it. His face softened as he read, and when he came to the end tears were in his eyes.

"Poor Marian!" he said, with choking

voice. "He never felt right about et, and he asks me to forgive him. God knows I do it, fully!"

"Keep the letter," said Dick. "It is your brother's last message."

The man put it into his pocket.

"Now, about those fellows who are trying to steal that mine; who are they, and what do you know about the matter?"

"Well, I don't know a whole lot about it. One of the fellows is a chap I heard called Gilman Spencer—"

"The mischief!"

"You know him?"

"I want to know him, and I am going to know him, too, before many moons. But, go on with your story."

"Well, he and another man named Henry Houser aire plannin' to get hold of the Susan Jane. I overheard 'em talkin' it over 'tween themselves. They wur' only waitin' fer some other scheme to come off—"

"Ha! I thought so."

"What ye mean?"

"No matter, go on."

"Well, et is somethin' hyar in Denver, and as soon as that is all right they mean to make their swoop fer ther Susan Jane."

"And we will make our swoop for them!"

"You kin bet your life that I will, anyhow, as soon as I git hold of my title clear to ther mine."

"And I will be with you. We will have business at Creede in a day or so, and there will be a surprise for somebody, if I don't mistake greatly. But now to business."

Arrangement was made with McTurk concerning the pig, and Dick and the old man left the place.

They first visited a barber's, where a bath and liberal application of the razor and scissors made a wonderful change in the appearance of the tramp showman. He hardly knew himself.

From there to a clothing emporium, and when they came forth Reginald Gustavo Spade looked like a gentleman.

He adopted now his true name.

"Now, one other thing," said Dick.

"What is that, pard?"

"That is just it, your language. You must lay off your uncouth manner of speaking, if you can do it, and make your language fit your appearance."

"Goshaway! but that will be a sticker. Might ez well ask Angelina to lay off her bristles and take on wool!"

"You must give it your attention and do the best you can."

"All right, pard, I'll try."

"And now for the visit to your brother's home, where you will meet his wife, or widow, now, and see your brother's body."

They set forward at once, and in due time were at their destination, where something of a surprise awaited Dick. The door was opened by a woman-servant, who informed him that Mrs. Roh had been arrested.

Dick could hardly believe that he had heard aright, and he inquired immediately for Barlow, the butler.

CHAPTER XVII.

MAKING A CLEAN SWOOP.

"Gone!" Dick exclaimed, when so informed by the woman.

"Yes, sir; he went away with the officers who arrested Mrs. Roh, and I suppose went to the police."

"Then there was some new evidence against the woman?"

"Yes, sir."

"What was it?"

"Blood was found on the sleeve of her gown, and a little stone from her ring

was found under the grate where the knife was discovered wrapped in the handkerchief. The butler found it."

"Then he played the detective?"

"Yes, sir."

"And he gave the information?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, we must come in. This gentleman is Mr. Roh's brother, and he desires to see the body."

They entered, and Dick pressed his questioning further, learning enough to satisfy himself that his suspicion against the butler had been well founded. He knew now the whole story.

That man was his game.

Sidney Roh took a long look at the face of his dead brother, and left the room silently weeping.

Deadwood Dick made a search of the butler's room, and found that the man had taken all his effects with him, in the way of small articles that he could easily carry on his person, and it was plain that he had no intention of coming back for his old clothes.

It had been noted that his room contained only the most scanty of personal effects. About all the man seemed to have was what was on his back.

When Dick and his companion left the house they went at once to the city prison.

There Dick asked for an interview with Mrs. Roh.

He had to make himself known in order to get it, and Mr. Roh waited without.

The woman was glad to see him.

"I have done as you said, sir," she informed him. "They arrested me, but I said nothing. They could not get me to talk. They accused me, but I said merely that I was innocent."

"The thing seems to have taken a new turn," said Dick. "What does it mean now, Mrs. Roh?"

"You have lost faith in me?"

"No."

"Then I will tell you, sir. It means that Barlow came to me and asked me to promise to marry him, saying that he had it in his power to save me or send me to the gallows."

"Ha! the rascal!"

"And I refused him, of course—I scorned the wretch!"

"Should think you would. And then he went to the police and gave further evidence against you?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right; we will attend to him if he is to be found, and I think I know where to look for him."

"And I am to remain here?"

"Yes, for the present. It will add to the mystery."

"Well, I will wait patiently for you to act, Mr. Bristol, but you know it is a trial."

"The sky will be all the clearer when the storm has passed away," Dick encouraged. "I shall make all haste with the matter, and you may be out of here in less than forty-eight hours."

"That will be in time for the funeral."

"You shall be at liberty and exonerated in time for that."

It was the promise of Deadwood Dick.

Leaving there, he and Sidney Roh went to the chief of police, where Dick inquired for Detective Bronson.

Fortune seemed to favor him at every turn, for Jim came in even while Dick was asking for him, and there was a general consultation, in which Dick showed his hand fully.

The chief and Bronson were amazed.

"I told you there was no use in my staying in," Jim remarked.

"There was every use in your staying

in, sir," said Dick. "This case is yours still."

"And where do I figure in it? You are the leading cornet; I am a tin whistle. But give me my little part and I will play it to the end. You are the master spirit."

"I tell you the case is yours," said Dick. "When I leave Denver I go for good, and it will rest with you to clear the matter up."

"Give me my part."

The Denver detective felt a little piqued, but he had a level head.

"Your part is to go with me to Creede at once and bring back the murderer of Marian Roh," said Dick.

"Well, if you say so."

"I do. You, chief, will attend to watching the house where Harmon Roh was imposed upon last night, and make such arrests as you think necessary. You will get there all the evidence you can ask for."

"I will see to that part of it, never fear."

"Then nothing remains but to go to Creede and scoop in the chief villains of the play."

"But what is the matter with visiting that house before you go?" put in Jim Bronson. "You will want some of the fun, now that you have had all the work, Deadwood Dick."

"The very thing," the chief quickly approved.

"But—"

"No but about it. You are the very man for the job. You and Jim go there the same as you went before, and I will have my men on hand to respond to your call."

"That is ther idee!" cried Sidney Roh, forgetting his correct dress and the language that went to correspond with it. "That is what we will do, and you kin count me in et! I only wish that Angelina—"

"You forget yourself, Mr. Roh," said Dick, smiling.

"Well, you are right, but I don't forget the cur that took my brother's life!"

So it was quickly arranged, and Deadwood Dick and the Denver detective set forth to carry out the work that needed to be done to complete the matter so far as Denver was concerned.

It was now night.

Arriving at the house, they were heartily welcomed.

The man they were looking for had not yet been there, and it was considered uncertain about his coming.

Nevertheless, they were welcomed, as said, and were urged to make themselves at home, which they proceeded to do, but in a way that was a surprise to all present.

The Denver detective put a whistle to his lips, gave a shrill blast, and immediately heavy steps sounded in the hall.

"What does this mean?" cried the proprietor of the place, alarmed.

"It means that you and every person here are prisoners!" answered Bronson, and he and Dick had guns in hand.

"You kin bet your life et does!" cried Sidney Roh. "We aire goin' ter go through ye like a road-agent through a mail bag, and ef ye say so much as peep, your name will 'pear in the dead list."

"But what is it for?" persisted the master of the place.

"It concerns the murder of Marian Roh," explained Deadwood Dick. "We know that that crime was hatched and furthered here in this house, and we mean to sift it to the bottom."

"It is a lie! We know nothing about it!"

"That remains to be seen. Harmon Roh spent last night here, and here the

proofs of the crime were put upon him. We are determined to get down to bed-rock in the case, and the quicker you make a clean breast of the thing the better."

The fellow saw there was no use denying further, so he named the ones who had aided in the matter, and they told all they knew about it, under promise that it would be made lighter for them for turning State's evidence. These were arrested, and when they had been examined Mrs. Roh and Harmon were freed.

But it was done secretly, so that the news might not reach Creede ahead of Deadwood Dick and his pards.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CREEDE CATCH.

By train, Creede is very much nearer to Denver, in point of time, than by trail.

It is no inconsiderable distance, actually, and only those take the trail who are forced to do so by some circumstance beyond their control. It takes longer, but it saves the fare.

This last consideration had influenced Harmon Roh, having use for the entire sum borrowed from McTurk on the morning of his setting out for Creede. But, it would seem, it had been so ordered by a higher power, to bring to pass succeeding events.

The first train out of Denver carried Deadwood Dick, Jim Bronson and Sidney Roh, and in due course Creede witnessed their arrival.

They looked like the usual run of daily comers and goers, and did not attract more than casual notice when they alighted. Dick was clad in blue shirt, big hat and rough garments.

The others were no better.

All looked like miners who had been having little luck of late.

A closer inspection would have given rise to question, but that was not made by any one.

They entered the principal street and quietly looked around until finally Sidney Roh espied the men for whom they were in search, and with them was a third.

This was one who had come on the same train with them.

Dick had noticed the man before, but had been unable to penetrate his disguise until now.

A smile played around Dick's lips, and when they had gone out of the saloon where the discovery had been made he said to his companions:

"Now for the little ruction. You go back in there and drop down quietly, while I go for a horse. I want to enter in a way that will make a sensation and draw a crowd."

"What is that for?" asked Jim.

"In a crowd they will have no chance to escape. Otherwise, they might get out and give us trouble."

"Well, you are the leader, so play your own tune," laughed Jim. "I'll bet there is going to be music in the air when you strike up, and I and the old man will do our little parts."

Dick went his way, the others returning into the saloon, which was not one of the crack palaces of Creede.

Gilman Spencer and Henry Houser were seated at a table, the new arrival with them.

The trio were talking earnestly, with heads together.

What was passing among them could not be overheard, but the two observers could imagine, and so they continued.

Having no suspicion that any one was watching them, they paid no attention whatever to their surroundings, and were still in the same relative positions when Dick returned.

The first notice of his coming was a heavy tread on the floor that jarred the whole structure and caused everybody to spring to their feet and look in the direction of the door, where, to the general surprise, a horse and rider appeared, the horse a pure white, and the rider smiling with good-will.

"Hyar we be!" the rider shouted. "Jest kem' to town, and want to git acquainted right away. How aire ye all?"

And he was so jolly, withal, that everybody liked him at sight—that is to say, all save one, and that one was the new arrival who had been sitting at the table with Spencer and Houser.

He paled, where his face could be seen for his beard, and turned and said something to his companions.

All looked hard at Dick, who seemed to take no notice.

Jim Bronson and Sidney Roh were moving over toward them, as had been arranged.

The proprietor of the place had, meanwhile, spoken to Dick, uttering gentle protest against such an invasion, and Dick was now responding to him in a way calculated to mollify his objections.

The new-comer left the other two and moved over toward the bar, edging toward the door, but there a crowd had already collected.

"Yas, landlord, I'll get right out again," Dick was saying. "I only dropped in to see if a friend of mine was here, a p'tic'lar friend that I am mighty anxious to find, and as soon as I look around a bit I'll amble right out again and no harm done, or if thar' has been, then I'll make good ther damages. Hillo! who aire you, Mister Man?"

With a sudden motion Deadwood Dick leaned over and caught hold of the beard worn by the late arrival, and with a jerk pulled it from his face.

It was a surprise for everybody, even for the man himself, who had not expected it. Dick had not seemed to look at him once, and yet in point of fact no motion of the fellow's had escaped his notice, as we have seen.

"Ther very feller I was after, as I live!" cried Dick. "How are you, Mr. Barlow? I want you for the murder of Marian Roh, of Denver!"

All Creede knew about the murder, and great was the excitement this assertion raised.

At the same time Jim and Sidney covered the other two with their guns.

"No use to try to lie out of it," Dick assured. "We have got you, and your pards, too, if you will just cast your eye over in their direction. You played a cute game, but something has dropped."

Useless to try to depict what followed.

When it was found out who Deadwood Dick was the whole town was in a state of excitement.

The prisoners were made secure—in fact, they would have been made more than secure had they not tamely submitted to the inevitable, and the next train saw them headed for Denver.

Deadwood Dick did not accompany the prisoners, saying that he had to respond to a call in another direction, but he allowed Creede to do him honor before he went away. There was a big blow-out to do the right thing by so distinguished a guest.

It was not his first visit there, and it might not be his last.

With so plain a case against them, the guilty wretches had to confess.

Gilman Spencer was chief of the rascals. It was he who had planned to put Mr. Roh out of the way, hoping that when he had done so he could win the love of the widow and marry the fortune.

The whole scheme had been carefully laid. Barlow was the one to do the deed, and was to receive a handsome sum for his part.

How he carried it out we will disclose.

On the night of the crime he concealed himself in the room, and by burning a peculiar powder, after the husband and wife had retired, made their sleep profound.

The knife had been previously obtained for him by an accomplice, at the house where Harmon spent that night, and after doing the deed the murderer secured the will and sent it to the house where Harmon was, where it was placed in his coat in the place where it was discovered. There was proof enough for it all, and the guilty wretch made a full confession, throwing the blame upon Spencer, as the instigator of the whole execrable scheme.

Both Mrs. Roh and Harmon were shown to be entirely innocent of any share in the matter, as Deadwood Dick had believed them to be from the first.

It had been planned by the villains to throw the crime upon Harmon in order to have him removed entirely by means of the law. He had been lured into a scheme at Creede, where, could he secure the use of a thousand dollars for a short time, a tempting fortune was held out to him as a bait. He went to Denver to see his father with the hope of getting that sum of money—which was the very thing the conspirators wanted, and the rest of their vile plot was easy to work out.

It might have been a success only for the intervention of Deadwood Dick. The estrangement between father and son had not been caused by the father's marrying a second wife, as the wife had supposed, but was due to a desire on the part of the son to establish himself as a showman, the same as his uncle had desired before him. Old Sidney had guessed it more closely than he had ever dreamed of doing. And, with the example of an erring brother before his mind's eye, no wonder that the father refused and withheld the means necessary to the success of such an enterprise.

But, vain refusal! for the uncle and nephew joined issue and launched out with a show that was a success from the very start.

The rascals received the deserts they so richly merited, and no one mourned the sheriff's good work.

THE END.

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